

First in the World Stakeholder Call

May 22, 2014

Coordinator: And I thank you all for standing by, at this time all participants are in listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session.

For you to ask a question you may press * one and record your name when prompted. Today's call is being recorded, if you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. Now I will turn the meeting over to your host Mr. (James Snyder), (WD) Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs, sir you may begin.

James Minor: Thank you, good afternoon everybody. I want to thank you for joining us today or this afternoon for what we here in the Department refer to as a stakeholder call.

We are very excited to engage you this afternoon about a new branch competition which is referred to as First in the World. With me this afternoon are a handful of colleagues from the Department, Ralph Hines, John English, Marsha Silverberg, Margo Anderson, Mary Wall and Julie Heinz.

But we are also pleased to have our Secretary of Education was able to join us this afternoon to not only greet you but to provide a brief overview for our call today. So without further ado let me introduce Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan.

Arne Duncan: Thanks so much James and welcome to the team. James, if you don't know, just recently joined us and this is a pretty fun project to start hitting the ground working on so we're doing some great work together on this. As he said, thanks to all of you for taking the time.

Over the next decade the majority of job opportunities in the U.S. as all of you know will require some level of postsecondary education. Make it a high quality postsecondary education a critical step on the pathway to opportunity. Unfortunately barriers like rising college costs make it pretty difficult for many students and families, particularly those from underserved and disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to, to persist in and to complete postsecondary study.

President Obama knows that earning some form of postsecondary education is the single most important investment student and families can make in their long-term future. And last August he outlined an ambitious agenda to combat

rising college costs and help make college more affordable, increase quality and improve educational outcome.

The President's plan included paying for performance by developing a college rating system, promoting innovation and completion in the higher education marketplace and ensuring that is affordable and manageable for students. The President noted that the Federal Government can act as a catalyst for innovation, spurring innovation in a way that drive down cost while preserving or actually increasing quality.

Innovation can take many forms and the first in the world is a key part of the President's current value and affordability agenda, aims to support a wide range of innovation at colleges and universities across the nation and serve as a catalyst for the best ideas that can dramatically enhance student outcomes.

As an evidence-based grant program First in the World will provide awards to institutions of higher education and spread the development and evaluation of innovative approaches and strategies that will improve educational access and outcomes and make postsecondary education more affordable and attainable for students and their families. Colleges all around the country are exploring and testing innovative approaches and strategies that aim to obtain better outcomes for students.

This includes area by competency based education that measure progress based upon outcomes rather than seat time, dual enrollment strategies that allow high school students to earn college credit before they graduate from high school and the redesign of teaching and learning that can help reduce the times to a degree as well as reducing cost. First in the World aims to harness these types of innovations because they have the potential to revolutionize the way students earn a degree or credential.

Through the First in the World program our administration is calling on institutions of higher ed to provide us with their best, most promising ideas to develop and test cutting edge approaches to improve outcomes for students, particularly those from underrepresented, underprepared or low income background.

We hope that through this program institutions will pioneer new and innovative ways to increase college access and success, reduce the time it takes for students to complete their higher education degree or certificate and improve affordability for students and families so that more Americans can get the educational training they desperately need to be successful in our global economy.

The evidence based approach of First in the World is important as it is designed to expand the research on innovative practices so that institutions can adopt models that prove to be successful. The First in the World Program gets its name from the goal that President Obama set for our nation early on in our Administration that by the year 2020 the United States will once again be the first in the world in college completion.

With this vision we are excited to ask colleges and universities nationwide for their best ideas to improve college attainment and affordability and we look forward to unleashing a new wave of innovation when awards are announced later this fall. Thanks so much, I will hand it back over to James who will walk you through some detail of this 2014 competition, James.

James Minor: Thanks so much Arne, I want to just take a couple of minutes to offer a few additional details about the 2014 competition.

The first thing I want to say is that the notice for the First in the World Competition was published in the Federal Register on Vol. 79, No. 95 for those who catalog Federal Register. This past Friday, May 16 additional information in details are also available on the FIPSE Web site. For those of you who may not know FIPSE stands for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, it should be very easy to find on the Department's Web site.

I also want to let you know that we are planning to have two webinars for the First in the World Competition that have been scheduled. The first is scheduled for May 28 from 1:30 to 3:30 Eastern Standard Time and the second is scheduled for June 4, 1:30 to 3:30 Eastern Standard Time. You must register for the webinars and registration information for those webinars is available or will be available on the FIPSE Web site.

A couple additional details: the application deadline for this competition is June 30, 2014; the review process will run roughly from July 21 through August 29; and then the announcements of the awards will be made on or before September 30, 2014. A total of \$75 million has been appropriated for the 2014 competition. Up to \$20 million of that \$75 has been set aside for minority serving institutions which you'll hear us refer to as MSI's later in the call.

We are anticipating making anywhere between 19 and 38 grants which will range between \$2 million and \$4 million. We anticipate that the average grant award will be about \$3 million over the four year grant period. Institutions of higher education, individually or in consortium are eligible to apply. Institutions of higher education may partner with public or private agencies or associations but those agencies are not eligible to apply individually in this

year's competition. Again these are all details that are available on the Department's FIPSE's Web site; they should be very easily accessible to you.

There are five absolute priorities that must be addressed for this competition. It is important to note that the Department will only consider applications that address one of the following five priorities.

The first is increasing access and completion for underrepresented, underprepared and low income students.

The second priority is increasing community college transfer rates to four-year colleges and specifically for underrepresented, underprepared and low income students.

Absolute priority number three, increasing enrollment and completion of underrepresented, underprepared and low income students specifically in science, technology, engineering and mathematics which we all refer to as STEM and those various degree and certificate programs.

Absolute priority number four, reducing time to completion and again these are focused for underrepresented, underprepared or low income students.

Absolute priority number five is improving college affordability, especially for underrepresented, underprepared and low income students.

So I want to make those priorities absolutely clear. I think folks in the Department have consulted far and wide in terms of those priorities in making sure they align with the President's goal and the spirit of the competition.

I want to say just a couple of other things about what we think characterizes those successful First in the World project. There are probably as many as six here that I want to list for you which are also outlined in the notice. But they are sort of characteristics that we think will embody a successful project.

The first is a project design that is supported by a strong theory - it's defined in the notice. Two is a data collection plan which we'll talk a little bit about later in the call, three a design and implementation plan for evaluation that will demonstrate whether or not the strategies implemented are showing moderate evidence or effectiveness as defined again in the notice. Number four we're interested in projects that might be deemed replicable or scalable in terms of the reform strategies outlined. The fifth a strong focus on improved postsecondary access affordability and completion again with an emphasis on low income students. And the sixth is a strategy for improvement of postsecondary productivity, effectiveness that holds a steady - that holds steady or decreases the actual cost for students.

So what I have shared with you are the absolute priorities for the competition and sixth characteristics that we think will embody successful projects for the competition.

Two other pieces of information I want to share with you before we move into our question-and-answer part of the call. The first has to do with evidence. I really do think what many of you who have participated in competitions previously will see an increased focus on the level of evidence associated with these projects. So to be eligible for an award in this year's competition a development grant must be supported by a strong theory and I think that's important.

The final, you know, sort of piece of that - the application must submit what we're referring to as a logic model for the proposed project. The applicants may submit a rationale for interventions that have not been tested or tried but - and that only have marginally been considered or explored in the higher education community. So again focus on strong theory and a logic model which must be a part of the applications.

Finally I want to on this point of evidence just make one other point or highlight one other point in the competition notice and that is a competitive preference priority that applications will receive additional two points - two additional points for this competitive priority for applications using what we refer to as evidence of promise as the application of evidence standard. And that standard of evidence was clearly spelled out in the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standards which was also available on the IES Web site.

So having said that I'll end there. I want to pass it over to my colleague Mary Wall who will facilitate the question-and-answer portion of the call, Mary.

Mary Wall: Thanks James and Anna we are ready to go into questions and answers.

Coordinator: All right thank you, we will not proceed to the question-and-answer session, if you would like to ask a question please press * and then the number one.

Please un-mute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce your question. To withdraw your request please press * then the number two, one moment please for the first question. All right our first question will be coming from the line of - that will be Amy - your line is open.

Amy: Hi thank you for taking my question. We're a national organization that's (a version) of higher education campuses and we also have state affiliates. And

I'm wondering about multiple applications being put in even though the organizations are separate, how would that work and if it's allowable even though they have the same name.

Mary Wall: Hi this is Mary, I'm not quite sure I'm understanding your question so I'm going to try to provide some context and you should feel free to ask if it is - if this isn't right.

But an institution which would be eligible to put their name on it - one application as the lead applicant but would be eligible to participate in other applications that are - consist of consortium of institutions. But the only eligible applicant for the First in the World Competition are institutions of higher education.

Amy: Thank you.

Coordinator: All right thank you, our next question will be coming from the line of Damian; your line is open.

Damian: Hi thank you Ms. Wall for taking my question - I'm Damian from Cambridge State University and my university along with seven others are part of a program called the First Scholars Program and I was wondering could you give more background on the types of organizations that we can partner with that are institutions of higher education?

James Minor: Sure and actually organizations that you can partner with for a private and public organization and we don't really have a recommendation per se - there are lots of organizations out there I'm sure that you work with.

So really we're not being prescriptive, we're just saying that institutions have to be the applicant but they can partner with a variety of private and public non-profit institutions and organizations.

Damian: Thank you so much.

James Minor: Yes.

Coordinator: All right thank you, our next question will be coming from the line of Ms. Robin, ma'am your line is open.

Robin: Hi, thank you for taking my question. I am from McDaniel College which is a small college and we were wondering if this is an environment where we can be competitive with all the other large institutions and consortiums that are interested.

Mary Wall: Yes, so we believe yes that you can be competitive in this environment.

We are really - we have put a lot of thought into as I noted inviting applications as well as the questions and answers and applications packets that are provided on the Web site where we discuss First in the World to indicate what makes for a strong application. And as you just heard James kind of go over some of the criteria, there's a lot of different components there. We believe that institutions of all sizes and a great diversity of them would be really well suited to put in strong applications and ultimately receive funding.

We recognize of course that there are - that this is a - that the size of the award is relatively small in terms of the overall size of amount of funding. Which again we do think will also play to smaller institutions as well as larger institutions who are say looking at a subset of students that they would be working with as part of a proposed project. But there is - we believe that this competition is very open to both and we encourage both to apply.

Robin: Thank you.

Coordinator: All right thank you, one moment please for the next question. All right our next question will be coming from the line of Ms. Sara; Ms. Sara your line is open.

Sara: Good afternoon, I'm calling from Western Washington University and I had a question in regards to the absolute priorities.

I know that there are five that have been listed, are you leaning towards grant applications that are focusing specifically on one priority or what are your thoughts about potentially looking at different elements of our plans that cut across those priorities?

Mary Wall: So we were very intentional in doing this. We recognize that there would be some degree of overlap for sure amongst those priorities and that an institution really could write a proposal for a project that could speak to any number of those.

But we are asking for institutions to really focus on one of them and on the spirit of what that priority is looking for. So specifically to give an example of the first priority increasing access in completion really looking comprehensively about at what gaps exist in an institution or a consortium of institutions that you'd be looking to close either through some proposed project that would get at access and persistent and ultimately completion for underrepresented, underprepared or low income students.

I think it's clear that that there could be cost savings that would be delivered to a student; in other words that could speak to college affordability. Or that even you could imagine that some of them could work towards the reduced time to completion or an on-time completion which again would get at the idea of cost savings for students. But we're asking applicants to pick one of these areas so that as we are evaluating all applications we have the clearest sense of what the institution's focus is.

There is -we are simply putting all of these priorities out there without an express guarantee that we would be funding projects in all these areas. We will look at all of the - all of the projects across all priorities and we will be funding the highest quality applications. So it may be that we fund within all five priorities or it may not and that will depend on the overall quality of the applications that we receive.

Sara: Great, thank you very much.

Coordinator: All right thank you, our next question will be coming from the line of Ms. Nora, ma'am your line is open.

Nora: Good afternoon, thank you for taking my question. My name is Nora from the Greater Community College and I'm here with colleagues from Texas State University.

We have a question, provided that we have a strong theory for our proposal or proposals are there limitations on the allowable activity?

Ralph Hines: Well - okay well the idea is that you're going to propose a project that has various components that support the main thrust of your project.

And so the idea that the Department of Education certainly under rules and regulations do have certain limitations but going forward basically you would only want to ask for funds that are absolutely necessary to implement the program and that are reasonable. So to that extent I wouldn't say not to be concerned at this point, but there would be an opportunity for you to ask more specific questions along this line certainly during our webinar which we're going to hold on the 28th and the 3rd of June.

But you could also talk to our program staff if you have a specific issue - an item that you really have a concern about.

Nora: Is there like tuition sites and things like that?

James Minor: Well I think where Ralph is, my colleague Ralph Hines was suggesting is that we're - I mean we're not overly prescriptive about budget line items so long as

they are clearly associated with the project and the priorities that have been outlined in this competition.

So, you know, as long as they are, you know, sort of in keeping what we typically see in projects and higher education I don't think we're overly prescriptive there. If you're running a program or you're proposing a program or project that's focused on increasing access and completion for underrepresented students and the component of your program or project involves paying stipends to tutors or individuals who are helping students transition from high school to college, whatever the nature of that project is I think in general terms would be permissible.

Mary Wall: And to be clear just to add onto that, this is an institutional grant program so it would not be permissible use of funds for instance would be direct student assistance using this money, so in other words scholarships to students.

But again as part of a program and as Ralph and James had described you will propose what you see as the associated costs and if there are specific questions about things that you're thinking of we would again be happy to address those in one of the webinars over the next two weeks.

Coordinator: All right thank you, our next question will be coming from the line of Mr. Johnson; Mr. Johnson your line is open.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you very much and I appreciate this conference call opportunity. My question has to do with your addressing cost share and recovering indirect cost. Would you explain both of those to us please? Thank you.

Ralph Hines: When you say direct cost, the indirect cost for this training grant program is 8 percent. So when you say recovery it's only 8 percent of those programs so beyond that I'm not sure what your question is.

Mr. Johnson: How much does the institution have to contribute as part of its share of the grant?

Ralph Hines: There's no matching requirement for this program but obviously if you're requesting funds from the Department clearly the institution would want to be a part and in this. So I think you would want to use certainly your judgment to determine what it is that the institution can support and what is necessary to enable this program - this project to go forward.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you very much.

Coordinator: All right thank you, our next question will be coming from the line of Mr. Swanson; your line is open.

Mr. Swanson: Hello and thank you, my question is regarding do you see as the appropriate balance between providing a strong theory on the one hand and wanting to implement continually innovative practice on the other.

How would you suggest applicants break a balance between providing that strong theory without - and at the same time being sufficiently innovative to fulfill this competition's expectation?

James Minor: You know, I...

Mary Wall: Go ahead James.

James Minor: I would just want to briefly say, you know, it's a great question and I think what we're hoping to see in this competition are things that our colleagues in the field have reason to believe are potentially effective or successful in terms of improving student outcomes and improving degree completion.

And, you know, I don't - I had not at least thought of them as a balancing act which might indicate you have to have, you know, one or the other or there's a sort of a tradeoff. I think what we're looking for with respect to strong theory is logic evidence or rational of why this particular approach or practice or set of policies in practice actually works for students.

And so I mean that's the way we tended to think about it, not that there's sort of a trade-off, a theory is a theory, right - assumptions about how something happens or a particular phenomenon. And some theories are strong and some are less strong and I guess what we're asking for are if you have assumptions about why a particular practice or policy or teaching or learning strategy is effective we just ask you to spell out that theoretically why you believe that to be the case.

Margo: Thanks James. I would just add to that that it is - that this is in our first year of this program as you saw in the notice inviting applications. This is for development grants only which is, as we have indicated, as an eligibility requirement, it requires strong theory with the submission of a logic model.

And that James had mentioned it - additional evidence is incentivized through the competitive preference priority but the approach here -- and it's similar to the approach that the department had taken in the investing in innovation program, or the I3 program -- is that it is a - it will be a tiered evidence framework in future years.

So in other words, in order to be eligible in future competitions, again, this is not in this year's competition, but that there would be more than one tier of

evidence and more than one tier of funding that institutions would be eligible to apply for.

So that would be kind of a look at the future of this but, again, for the time being, we invite you to submit your best and most promising ideas based on a strong theory and, again, if you choose to submit additional evidence via the competitive preference priority.

Mr. Swanson: Thank you very much.

Coordinator: All right, thank you. Our next question will be coming from the line of Mr. Hopson from Howard University. Sir, your line is open.

Mr. Hopson: Yes, thank you. I think Mr. Johnson's question covers mine. It had to do with the evidence issue. So I'm good.

James: All right, next question.

Coordinator: All right, one moment please. Once again, just a reminder for the participants, to ask the question please press star 1. You will be prompted to record your name. To withdraw your question, please press star 2.

James Minor: So that means we don't have a question presently, I wonder if it's worth elaborating just a little bit more on the evidence piece of this. And Mary, I think you had a good point about future years as well take it. I mean, if you heard Secretary Duncan mentioned earlier, there is so much emphasis placed on innovation.

And we know that there are lots of great things that are happening in the higher education community. But we also know that there's not a lot of evidence to support the effectiveness of those practices or the innovation that's going forth across the sector.

And so we really are interested in that. You know, there's a lot of back and forth internally about what the level of evidence should be for the first year of the competition. And I think the development grants that will be made this year represent that.

And we know - what we're anticipating is the buildup of evidence will happen over - or in the following years of the competition. So what we're hoping to see is lots of innovation and strong theory about why there is reason to believe that those practices are or will be particularly effective.

Mary Wall: Thank you, James. Anna, are there additional questions in the queue?

Coordinator: Yes, we do have. Right now a question will be coming from Mr. Levine. Sir, your line is open.

Mr. Levine: Good afternoon. My question is related to points added or deducted or preference shown by institutional type or size. Does the creditor of an institution matter or its tax status for profit or not for profit status in the application or probability of success?

Ralph Hines: The answer to that question is no. There are no points added or taken away based on the size of the institution or the type of it. As long as it's a nonprofit or private institution, then they would be eligible - assuming they stick within the general category of MSI.

Mr. Levine: So, pardon me, I didn't hear you. So are you saying that profit status does matter?

Ralph Hines: Nonprofit - public and private institutions of higher education. For-profit institutions are not eligible to compete in this competition.

Mr. Levine: Okay.

Coordinator: All right. Thank you. Right now our question will be coming from the line of Ms. Kapp. Ma'am, your line is open.

Ms. Kapp: Hi, I'm Ms. Kapp from (Bramin) University. We are a Hispanic Serving institution and we want to make sure that that designation is part of an MSI.

Mary Wall: It is. Yes. In order to be considered an MSI as part of the competition you'll see in the application package that it is a - there is a space for you to indicate that you are - they would be considered an MSI and that would be - that would include a Hispanic serving institution.

As is indicated there as well, you do not need to have the designation of MSI currently and/or be receiving funds as an HSI or another MSI currently in order to be considered an MSI for the purpose of this competition as long as you are eligible - able to demonstrate that you would meet the conditions in order to be considered an MSI, then you are considered that for competition.

Ms. Kapp: Perfect. Thank you.

Coordinator: All right. Thank you. Our next question will be coming from Texas Christian University. Ma'am, your line is open.

Woman: Good afternoon. Thanks for having us. I would like to know - we would like to know, is there specific sample size going into these developmental grants at all in the outcomes?

Ralph Hines: By sample size, can you - I don't think I'm clear about what you're asking about a sample size.

Woman: With respect to the students, with respect to the respondents in the project we may develop. Is there a specific sample size for that or a minimum? Is there a minimum sample size?

Margo: Yes, there is no minimum number of students who would need to be served as part of the project. Again, you are - you would be developing a project and indicating in that proposal what the anticipated number of students that you would serve.

Marsha: However, we encourage you to review the definitions for moderate evidence, which is what you will have to design your evaluation around should you be a successful grantee because in order to achieve that standard, there are some definitions that relate to sample size regarding that standard. So it would be useful to review the criteria.

Woman: Thank you.

Coordinator: All right, thank you. Our next question we coming from the line of Mr. McVee from Walla Walla University.

Woman: Hi. Can you tell me what percentage of your student population has to be underrepresented in order to qualify for this grant?

Woman: So there's no designated percentage of the student population that would have to be considered underrepresented, underprepared or low income for the purpose of this grant. We are, again, looking to you in your proposal to develop a project around those students on their campuses.

And again, looking to you as part of the evaluation of a successful grantee project as well to indicate how there have been measurable advancements or achievements for that student population. But we are not stipulating in a certain percentage or actual figure of students there.

Woman: Thank you.

Coordinator: All right. Our next question will be coming from the line of (unintelligible) from (unintelligible) College. Sir, your line is open.

Man: Thank you so much and let me thank FIPSE for this great opportunity you put together. I'm just uncertain about one point. I understand that (unintelligible) would be a nonprofit institution of higher education. However, they we partner with a private for-profit educational consultant firm?

Mary: Would you be able to repeat that question? You were going in and out on the line.

Man: Yes ma'am. Let me say it again. Thank you to FIPSE for this great opportunity and for taking my question. I know that the lead organization would have to be a nonprofit institution of higher education as Miles College is but I was wondering if we may profit - if we may partner with a for profit educational consulting company which specializes in evaluation and assessment?

Mary: Yes. For the purpose of - if you're looking at it, again, for the purposes of evaluation and assessment that would be permissible.

Man: Great. Great. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: All right, thank you. Our next question will be coming from the line of Mr. Ham. Sir, your line is open. Mr. Ham.

Mr. Ham: Yes, this is Mr. Ham. Thank you very much for taking my call today and for the information. The priority areas, I know you mentioned that you, you know, you must focus on one of those. But what if you are doing a number of those things well? I mean, does that enhance the competitiveness of the application or does it - could it hurt you that you're not as focused as (you would want us to be)?

James: The purpose of these absolute priorities, obviously, because we really want to get the research and background data on where we are and really specific is intervention. So while it was indicated early on that we realize that you focus on one absolute priority, there may be certainly a bleeding into the other areas obviously.

But we do want you to indicate very clearly and very strongly that you are - you have chosen one of the absolute priorities. We don't want you to say "Well, we do all of them well." And I think that does not help us really to really try to separate and identify the different projects that would fall under those buckets.

But the fact of the matter is that we realize that several of them are complementary, but we do really want you to pick one and then perhaps if it

bleeds, as I said, early on, it to others or anything, logically, it seems like that would be okay.

Mr. Ham: Okay, thank you.

Coordinator: All right, thank you. Our next question will be coming from the line of Mr. Keechi from Delaware State University.

Mr. Keechi: Hi. Thank you for taking my question and thank you for a great presentation. My question is - relates to what happens after the grant is over. I heard one of the priorities and one of the characteristics of a good proposal is to show replicability. But are you also -- and I assume you are but I just want to make sure -- looking for - that we demonstrate that this program would be sustainable and our institution perhaps until the grant is over?

Ralph: Yes, actually FIPSE is always really - looks very closely at projects that have great potential for, not only replication, but also institutionalization.

So to the extent that this program will be established at your institution you'll build on it and certainly there will be clear evidence that it will have a great chance of being continued and that other institutions, perhaps, would see it as a model. So we do want to see the longevity with regard to the results of this particular project.

James Minor: And in the spirit, I would say after that, and the spirit of the innovation of this program, of course, there would be as is indicated in the notice, a rigorous evaluation associated with this. So the idea would be that we are looking to certainly - to be able to provide the higher education community in general more of a base of what works.

And so we want - we certainly know that this will - there will be - we're certainly hopeful for many or all successful projects but this is also something where we will be testing new and innovative approaches. And so there - we want to be able to identify those that work and for those that work, continue to spread and expand them.

James: I think that's well said, Mary. You know, I have always thought of this as the sort of coming together of innovation and evidence, right. So, you know, the idea of it simply being innovative without evidence that it is suggested that it is particularly effective, I don't view as all that helpful.

So I really do appreciate sort of highlighted the sort of coming together of innovation with defensible evidence that these innovative practices actually are effective.

Man: Thank you so much. Really, that's very helpful. Thank you.

Coordinator: All right, thank you. Our next question will be coming from the line of Ms. Harris. Ma'am, your line is open.

Ms. Harris: Yes, hi. I had two additional questions. One has to do with the Webinars and if those two dates are the same Webinar being offered twice or are they covering different types of questions. So that's my first question. My second one, really has to do with the four year award, and whether we're - I'm assuming we're a proposal that is for all four years that we can budget over four years. Or is this on a year-to-year contingency?

Ralph: The answer to your first question is that the Webinar for May 28th and the webinar for June 4th, there will be - actually we'll repeat the information that we offer on May 28th but we will certainly add some additional information based on questions that perhaps come forth during the May 28th.

So the point is that we know there are lots of folks who will sign up for those Webinars and we're not asking anyone to have to sit in on both. But that's - and the fact that we'll have frequently asked questions on our Web site, is - I don't think it's necessary for anyone to have to sit in on both those sessions. They will be similar and it would be, I think, repetitive for someone to sit through both.

Ms. Harris: Great. Thank you.

Ralph: Now, as to the second question - had to do with - oh, the four years. The grants will be for four years so you do need to present a plan, a budget, and other supporting data that would certainly represent the program over the for your life of the project.

Ms. Harris: Great. Thank you very much.

Ralph: You're welcome.

Coordinator: All right, thank you. Our next question will be coming from the line of Mr. Kramer of the University of Wisconsin.

Hi, this is (Ms. Salmon), (Steve) and (Rob) are sitting next to me here. So if it sounds weird having a female versus a male voice. A couple of questions, is there some criteria or definition for underrepresented, underserved - I'm using the right words - underprepared or low income students?

The second question is can funding be used to support K-12 students and pool development for higher education? And the third question I have is, if we're

awarded the grant, what would it start because of we're planning and it starts right in September, that has an impact on how we do the planning for the proposal? Thank you.

Ralph Hines: Well, let me start with the last question. The grants would start October 1 of this year. And the first year of the grant we run from October 1 through September 30th of 2015. And for the question related to K-12, this grant is for institutions of higher education and while they may work with K-12 on a certain level, it's not designed to support students in the K-12 arena.

So you want to be very careful with the suggestions of the plans that you put forth that would certainly fall outside of what an institution of higher education should be doing to try to improve access, assistance and completion.

Mary: And certainly, I'll just add that there could be plenty of innovative strategies that could work very comprehensively with the school district or a collaboration of K-12 schools as well.

I think if - I think what I heard you ask about whether the money could go directly to K-12 students, again, just like on the - just like students in postsecondary institutions, it is not - you cannot use these funds as direct student financial aid or assistance.

And finally the - I think the answer to your other question, there are no - they are not explicit definitions of underrepresented, underprepared or low income students in the notice. I think will be - we're coming up on the end of the hour so operator, I think we're going to be able to take two more questions.

Coordinator: To more questions. All right. All right, our next question -- one moment -- that will be coming from the line of Ms. Mordeen of Northern Illinois University.

Ms. Mordeen: Hello. I have a question about the number of awards that are possible. I understand that an institution can submit one proposal as the lead applicant and one for participating in other consortium applications.

Mary: That's correct. So the idea is that you can - you would be able to - an institution would be able to submit a single application as the lead applicant, in other words, as the institution that would be receiving funding, as the FITW grant would go to a single institution.

However, if an institution elected to participate in some consortium or consortia of institutions they would be able to be a partner with - on another grant application. Again, though, they would not be able to be the lead entity

in more than one application or receive more than one award, either as an individual institution or as a - in terms of the lead of a consortium.

Ms. Mordeen: Okay, would be possible to receive an award as part of two different consortiums, though?

Mary: Well, two different - and those two different consortia, you would have two different lead institutions who would be receiving the funding. And yes, and, say, a third institution - could be party to both of those consortia.

Ms. Mordeen: And can I ask a quick question? The full application that's listed online...

Mary: Say it again. I couldn't hear you on that last question.

Ms. Mordeen: Is the full application expected to be posted on the Web site or on grants.gov?

Ralph: The application is posted online, I mean, on Grants.gov.

Ms. Mordeen: Okay, thank you.

James: All right, Mary, was that our second question?

Mary Wall: So I think we have just one more question.

James: We've got one more? Okay.

Coordinator: All right, one more question. That will be from Sacramento State University. Ma'am, your line is open.

Woman: Thank you for taking my call. My question is more clarification on the restriction to provide stipends or scholarships to students that was mentioned earlier. So, if in our proposal, we're trying to include engagement activities such as internships and scholarships to provide incentives for students to cover their college expenses, would that be an allowable expense?

Mary: Thank you for the question. We will - so again, and just to reiterate what we said earlier, this cannot be used as direct student aid. But I understand the nuance to that question as to whether it was designed as part of a proposal intervention or project related to something that addresses these overall priorities.

So we will take that one back and get back in touch with you on the answer to that question. We will - we can included in the questions and answers, frequently asked questions and answers, that is on the OPE Web site.

James: Which stands for the Office of Postsecondary Education.

Woman: Okay, thank you.

James Minor: Well, we're approaching 4:00 and on behalf of Secretary Duncan and my colleagues here in the department, I want to thank all 400 of you for joining us today. We are really excited about this competition. I hope you can hear or sense our enthusiasm over the phone.

What excites us is a lot of the activity that we know sort of going forth in the higher education community and the great work that's happening on your campuses, as we speak, so we are really looking forward to engaging you as we draw closer to the deadline for the competition.

I do want to ask you to remember the two dates for the Webinars, again, which is May 28th, 1:30 to 3:30 pm. Also, June 4th from 1:30 to 3:30. And I want to remind you that you do have to register for the Webinar as a measure of simply capacity. I think we had almost - we had over 900 RSVPs for this call.

We certainly could not accommodate that many so I encourage you to register early for the Webinars. Application deadline, again, is June 30th in the words will be announced on or before 30th of September. So having said that, if there are no other...

Mary Wall: James, I just want to quickly jump in because I think your line is breaking up just a little bit. Just to quickly re-review those dates, though Webinars will be May 28th and June 4th, 1:30 to 3:30 pm Eastern Time.

The deadline for applications is June 30, 2014. Awards will be announced by September 30, 2014. And for additional information, I know that this is all on our Web site but I just want to make sure that folks know they can go to www.ed.gov/fipse. You can also (e-mail) any additional questions that you might have to OPEfirstintheworld@ed.gov. And we thank everyone for participating. And we look forward to reading your applications.

James Minor: Thank you, Mary.

Mary: Thank you, operator.

Coordinator: That is the end of the conference. Thank you for participating. You may now disconnect.

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