

**The Role and Contribution of Academic Researchers in Congressional Hearings:  
A Critical Discourse Analysis**

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Abstract: This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis to explain how legislators determine the role and contributions of academic researchers in Congressional legislative hearings. The discursive practices that legislators use serve to construct the social identity of academic witnesses, characterize witnesses' qualifications, solicit information from witnesses, frame comments from witnesses, and amplify and mitigate witness testimony. The findings make visible the ways that legislators use the power of their positions to depict academic witnesses as both experts who offer independent knowledge and experts who validate or confirm a legislator's preferences and priorities. The results have implications for academics who seek to improve connections between research and policy and academics who seek to further advance the production of knowledge of federal policymaking processes.

Keywords: discourse analysis, higher education, policy, politics, postsecondary education

## **The Role and Contribution of Academic Researchers in Congressional Hearings: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

Scholars and other observers have long lamented the separation between researchers and policymakers (Caplan, 1979; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Perna, 2016). Nearly 40 years ago, Charles Lindblom and David Cohen (1979) noted policymakers' "dissatisfaction with social science and social research as instruments of social problem solving" as well as academic researchers' desire "to be more drawn upon, useful, or influential" (p. vii).

Themes of recent annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) suggest that education researchers continue to perceive a disconnection between research and policy. As articulated in the call for proposals, the 2017 annual meeting sought to advance understanding of such questions as, "How do we [members of AERA] transform the power of knowledge and scholarly discourses into public will, engaging practice, and responsive policy?" (Gadsden, Arzubiaga, & Davis, n.d.). Reflecting a similar sentiment, the call for proposals for the 2016 annual meeting challenged AERA members to produce "knowledge that engages policymakers and publics" (Oakes, Welner, & Valladares, n.d.).

These and other efforts may encourage academic researchers to consider the policy-relevancy of their research and strategies for communicating research results. Improving connections between research and policy also requires attention to the roles and actions of policymakers, as policymakers determine whether and how to use research. Examining policymaking processes from the perspective of policymakers may also inform some academics' concerns about politicization of research (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979). Some politicization may be inevitable, as research is more likely to resonate with policymakers when it is consistent with their views, beliefs, and preferences (Henig, 2008, p. 50). Yet understanding policymaking only

as “battles for leverage” may obscure the appropriate and constructive role research may play in informing political debate and advancing the public good (Henig, 2009).

Scholars have articulated elements of the policymaking process (e.g., Birkland, 2016) and the types of knowledge that policymakers seek (e.g., Ness, 2010; Weiss, 1979). Less is known about how legislators use the power of their position to depict academic researchers as experts who validate legislators’ beliefs and priorities or as experts who offer independent views. To address this knowledge gap, this study examines the discourse in an established venue for connecting researchers and policymakers: Congressional legislative hearings. Congressional committees are an important component of the policymaking process, as committees “review legislation, propose and vote on amendments, and in the end, decide whether a bill will die at the committee level or...be elevated to consideration by the full body” (Birkland, 2016, p. 114). Although some are skeptical about the influence of hearings on the legislative process (Deimer & Feddersen, 2000), hearings ostensibly enable legislators to gather information, explore ideas, and assess support for potential policy positions (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Brasher, 2006; Holyoke, 2008; Leyden, 1995).

To advance knowledge of the role and contribution of academic researchers, this study uses Critical Discourse Analysis to explain how legislators use the power of their positions to characterize academic researchers as experts who offer independent knowledge and experts who validate and confirm legislators’ preferences and priorities in hearings that have been held to inform the next reauthorization of the federal Higher Education Act. As a genre of discourse, Congressional legislative hearings have “a specific purpose in a specific social context” and established norms and rules governing all aspects of communication (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 27). By examining the discourse of these hearings, this study makes visible how legislators use

the power of their position to construct the social identities of academic witnesses, characterize witnesses' qualifications, solicit information, frame the comments witnesses offer, and amplify and mitigate witness testimony. The results have implications for academics who seek to improve connections between research and policy and for researchers who seek to further advance knowledge of federal policymaking processes.

### **Guiding Perspectives**

Public policy may be defined as “a statement of government intentions” for addressing an identified problem or achieving various goals (Dougherty, 2007, p. 198). This “statement” is typically the outcome of an ideological or political power struggle. With finite space on the policy agenda, the policy formation process necessarily involves competition among policymakers, as only some of the many possible issues and goals may be addressed (Birkland, 2016; Dougherty, 2007). Legislators compete to elevate their preferred interests and approaches and stop the advancement of others' (Birkland, 2016).

Policymakers' priorities may be influenced by multiple forces. Like other elected officials, members of Congress are motivated by the goal of reelection to respond to the needs and concerns of home districts and constituents. Policymakers must also choose from among multiple definitions of problems and potential solutions and build consensus for change (Birkland, 2016). And, they must reconcile their preferences with those of political party leaders who may demand support for policies on ideological or party-loyalty grounds as well as concerns of individual citizens and interest groups who target money, data, and other resources to try to influence legislators' priorities. Legislators' priorities may also be influenced by the media, as journalists may elevate attention to some issues but not others (Birkland, 2016).

Research may also influence policymakers' preferences and priorities (Birkland, 2016). Some research may improve policymakers' general understanding of a policy issue, whereas other research may advance a policymaker's political or tactical purposes by validating or confirming preferred approaches (Landry, Amara & Lamari, 2001; Ness, 2010; Rigby, 2005; Weiss, 1977, 1979). Research-based information may be supplied by academic researchers as well as by think tanks, state agencies, legislative research agencies, foundations, advocacy organizations, and other intermediary organizations. Academic researchers are asserted to be "good sources of information and ideas for research on important policy issues," especially issues that involve complex social problems with multiple potential solutions (Birkland, 2016, p. 170). Unlike interest groups and overtly ideological think tanks, academic researchers are said to offer perspectives that are independent from a larger political agenda and based on fair and rigorous examinations of data (Verger et al., 2018).

Existing theory and research considers how research may be used in the policymaking process, but little is known, from a critical discourse perspective, about how legislators use the power of their positions to determine the contributions of academic researchers in policymaking processes. Drawing from testimony, documents, and interviews, Shakespeare (2008) identifies sources of information used by different actors involved in higher education policymaking in New York state and describes constraints on information use, but does not explain how actors seek or use information to advance preferences. Discourse analysis assumes that language is not impartial or objective, but rather reflects a point of view (Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017, p. 210). A critical analysis requires attention to how verbal exchanges ("micro" events) are influenced by the contexts in which they occur, including established norms for interactions among participants in this type of discourse ("macro" structures, Fairclough, 2010). Drawing on

Foucault, Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to make visible the role of power (Bergström & Boréus, 2017; Dougherty, 2007).

In this study, we rely on Hay's (1997) definition of power. Drawing from political theory and a critique of definitions offered by others, Hay identifies two aspects of power: 1) indirect or context-shaping, when an actor defines or redefines the context in which the actions of others occur; and 2) direct or conduct-shaping, when one actor causes another actor to do something, regardless of that actor's preferences. Consistent with Hay's approach, we focus not on evaluating the legitimacy of actions or critiquing the distribution of power. Instead, our goal is to analyze how legislators use the power of their positions in this policymaking venue.

Through the witness selection process, legislators have the power to determine which outsiders' views are included (Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). Research has considered whether selection as a hearing witness is influenced by the resources and other characteristics of the employing organization (Leyden, 1995). Although the findings may be out of date, the likelihood of an interest group being invited to testify at a Congressional hearing has been shown to increase with such measures of organizational resources as the number of lobbyists located in Washington, DC, staff size, and number of institutional members (Leyden, 1995). No known study has considered the likelihood of an academic researcher serving as a witness or how legislators use their power to select and interact with witnesses to achieve their goals.

Individuals who are invited to participate must do so in ways that are consistent with the norms and expectations that legislators have established for this social institution (Fairclough, 2010), another aspect of the context-shaping power of legislators. Witnesses offer a prepared

statement, but then, per these established norms, each legislator determines whether and how to use their allotted time to ask questions (or not) of particular witnesses.

Legislators exert power directly through the discursive strategies they use to elicit responses from witnesses (Hay, 1997). Research suggests that legislators will use their positions in the discourse to selectively solicit academic research and other sources of information and frame this information to advance their priorities and constituency preferences (Caplan, 1979; Hess, 2008a, 2008b; Hird, 2009; Ness, 2010; Rigby, 2005; Tseng, 2012; Weiss, 1979).

Legislators may filter information based on personal experience and local conditions, as well as their understanding of the approaches that will advance their priorities and garner support from others (Head, 2010). Legislators are motivated to create and implement policy while also “maintaining support among allies, responding to media commentary, polishing leadership credentials, and managing risk” (Head, 2010, p. 80). As such, legislators may approach their interactions with witnesses with the goal of obtaining verbal support for priorities and beliefs (Henig, 2008; Lindblom & Cohen, 1979).

Because of the power of their positions in this genre of discourse (Hay, 1997), legislators choose the discursive practices that they use to construct the social identity and other contributions of witnesses (Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). Scholars have identified the conceptual, political, and instrumental uses of research by policymakers (Landry, Amara & Lamari, 2001; Ness, 2010; Rigby, 2005; Weiss, 1977, 1979). Less is known, from a critical perspective, about how legislators use the power of their position to guide, manage, and steer discourse to portray academic researchers as experts who validate and confirm legislators’ policy priorities and ideological preferences or as experts who contribute independent views and perspectives to the policymaking process.



## Research Methods

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis to explain how legislators use the power of their positions to determine the role and contributions of academic researchers in hearings that have been held to inform the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Of particular interest are the power of legislators to determine whose voices are included in a hearing and the power of legislators to depict the role and contributions of academic witnesses. To analyze these issues, we examine the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of academic researchers that legislators allow to contribute in the selected Congressional legislative hearings?
2. Do legislators use discursive strategies that frame academics as independent experts or experts who validate legislators' preferences and priorities?

Prior examinations of Congressional hearings have used content analysis to examine witnesses' written testimony (Edwards et al., 2011; Holyoke, 2008) and responses to questions from committee members (Burstein & Hirsh, 2007). More than describing discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to produce an explanation that transfers beyond the examined texts and identifies implications of the discourse for particular groups (in this case, academic researchers; Fairclough, 2010). Discourse analysis focuses on conversations and communicative events rather than decontextualized words or phrases (Wodak & Meyer, 2016) and views language use as social practice, that is, a product of and contributor to the social structures in which it occurs (Fairclough, 2010; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to explain "how language as a cultural tool mediates relationships of power and privilege in social interactions, institutions, and bodies of knowledge" (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui & O'Garro Joseph, 2005, p. 367).

## **Selection of Congressional Legislative Hearings**

As a genre of discourse, Congressional legislative hearings are characterized by well-defined discourse practices. According to the Government Publishing Office (2017), a Congressional hearing is typically a public meeting during which legislators may “obtain information and opinions on proposed legislation, conduct an investigation, or evaluate/oversee the activities of a government department or the implementation of a Federal law,” or explore and obtain information about selected issues.

This study examines Congressional legislative hearings that have been held to inform the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). HEA is the most important piece of federal legislation for promoting higher education access, attainment, and affordability in the United States. The stated purpose of the original law (Public Law 89-329) that President Lyndon Johnson signed on November 8, 1965 was “to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities and to provide financial assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education” (p. 1219). Congress has reauthorized the Act eight times since 1965, in 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1986, 1992, 1998, and 2008. The 2008 reauthorization expired in 2013 (with authorized programs extended).

Hearings pertaining to HEA reauthorization are appropriate for critically examining the use of power in federal policymaking, as reauthorization offers legislators the opportunity to create, eliminate, and/or substantially change federal higher education programs. Past reauthorizations have established the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG, now the Federal Pell Grant) in 1972, the short-lived State Postsecondary Review Entities in 1992, and the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) in 1998. Drawing on the review of prior research and theories about federal policymaking processes (e.g.,

Birkland, 2016; Dougherty, 2007), we assume that, to create new programs and make other changes in HEA, legislators must persuade and compete with other legislators to build consensus for preferred changes and stop the advancement of changes that are inconsistent with these preferences. Academic research is one source of information that legislators may include in the discourse of a legislative hearing to advance their own policy goals and priorities.

### Selection procedures

To find relevant hearings, we first identified all hearings hosted by Congressional committees with jurisdiction over the HEA reauthorization: the House Committee on Education and the Workforce (including the subcommittees on Higher Education and Workforce Training and Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness)<sup>1</sup> and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. From committee websites, we found 605 hearings held between August 15, 2008, the day after the enactment of the 2008 reauthorization, and April 30, 2016, six months prior to the 2016 presidential election. Although Senator Tom Harkin, then-Chair of the HELP Committee, stated that the September 19, 2013 hearing “marks the kickoff of the reauthorization process of the Higher Education Act in the Senate,” we found hearings focused on issues relevant to HEA reauthorization as early as May 20, 2009.

To identify hearings relevant to HEA reauthorization, one author first reviewed the title of each hearing to determine if it was related to education. For hearings with ambiguous titles (e.g., “Ensuring economic opportunity for young Americans”), the author reviewed the transcript to identify whether the focus was on issues pertaining to higher education. Of the 605 hearings, 191 focused on education. One author reviewed opening statements by the committee chair of each of the 191 hearings to determine if higher education was the focus ( $n=80$ ). All three authors then reviewed and discussed the topics covered in the transcripts of the 80 hearings. We agreed

to exclude hearings focused on job creation, vocational skills, and technical education, as well as hearings focused on political appointments, the president's proposed budget, and two hearings that featured testimony only from then-Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education Arne Duncan. Although the latter two categories include attention to HEA-relevant topics, these hearings focused on legislators' reactions to, and probes of, the president's proposals, rather than legislators' use of academic witnesses to advance their own agendas. We included a few hearings with titles that suggest attention to topics unrelated to HEA, but had considerable relevant discussion. For instance, the hearing entitled, "Exploring Efforts to Strengthen the Teaching Profession," discussed both the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Title II of HEA.

Through this process, we identified 56 hearings relevant to HEA reauthorization (see Appendix A). More than half of the 56 hearings ( $n=30$ ) were held by the Senate HELP Committee, with the remainder held by the House of Representatives' full Committee on Education and the Workforce ( $n=8$ ) and its Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training ( $n=16$ ) and Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness ( $n=2$ ). Two authors again reviewed the opening statements from committee chairs to categorize the topic of the hearing. The most common topic of the 56 hearings was student financial assistance (Title IV of HEA). Two hearings focused on issues related to teacher quality enhancement (Title II) and two on minority-serving institutions (Title III; Table 1).<sup>2</sup>

To identify the characteristics of witnesses allowed to contribute to the 56 hearings (research question 1), we collected from committee websites and hearing transcripts the name, job title, and organizational affiliation of all witnesses at each hearing, as well as the academic rank and discipline of academic witnesses (Table 2). We did not examine witnesses' gender, race, or other demographic characteristics as this information was not reported.

## **Analysis of hearing transcripts**

To understand the discursive strategies that legislators use to frame the role and contributions of academics in the discourse (research question 2), we analyzed legislators' exchanges with the 22 academic witnesses who testified in 19 of the 56 hearings. Complete hearing transcripts are posted on committee websites after they are transcribed and published by the Government Publishing Office. As of August 2017, full hearing transcripts were available for all but two of the identified hearings. Both of the hearings with unavailable transcripts were held by the Senate HELP Committee; neither included an academic witness (one discussed "Combating Campus Sexual Assault" and the other "Opportunities to Improve Student Success"). Although including only oral remarks, hearing transcripts provide complete textual accounting of the discourse.

Multiple methods and theories are used in Critical Discourse Analysis (Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017; Rogers et al., 2005; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). In this study, we established analytic procedures by drawing on examples and guidelines offered by others (e.g., Bergström & Boréus, 2017; Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017; Fairclough, 2010; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

As is common in education research (Rogers et al., 2005), our analytic approach is grounded in Fairclough's three-tiered framework. Fairclough (2010, p. 95) posits that discourse has three elements: an oral or written text, a discourse practice that defines how the text is created, disseminated, and interpreted, and social practice. A discourse practice influences, and is influenced by, social practices (Fairclough, 2010). Social practices are the "patterns of action, habits and conventions that follow more or less explicit rules" of the social context (in this case, a Congressional hearing; Bergström & Boréus, 2017, p. 6).

To develop an explanation for how legislators use the power of their position to portray academic researchers as independent experts and experts who validate legislators' preferences, we engaged in an iterative process (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). We linguistically describe the text (micro events), analyze the discourse practices and sociocultural context influencing the production of the text (macro structures), and interpret the text in light of discourse practices and context. The discourse of a Congressional hearing reflects established understandings of language use and participant roles.

Recognizing the value of incorporating multiple approaches (Rogers et al., 2005), our analytic approach is also informed by the discourse-historical approach (DHA) described by Reisigl and Wodak (2016). DHA is particularly appropriate for this analysis, as DHA seeks to uncover the discursive practices that “mediate and reproduce” beliefs (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 25). DHA views power as an ideological struggle and is manifest through “control of the social occasion” and “regulation of access to specific public spheres” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 26). This view of power is consistent with Hay’s (1997) attention to how an actor may use the power of their position to directly and indirectly advance personal goals and priorities.

Guided by the discursive strategies outlined by Reisigl and Wodak (2016), we orient our review, analysis, and interpretation of discursive strategies used in the identified hearings to address the following five sub-questions:

1. How do legislators refer to academic witnesses linguistically?
2. What characteristics and qualities do legislators attribute to academic witnesses?
3. What types of information do legislators solicit from academic witnesses?
4. How do legislators frame the comments they receive from academic witnesses?
5. How do legislators amplify and mitigate witness statements?

Recognizing the importance of articulating the theory that guides data interpretation (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), we draw on theory and research about policymaking to address the five sub-questions. We employ a producer-oriented strategy to interpreting the text, seeking to understand meaning within this discourse genre from the perspective of legislators. We attend to the kind of speech act (e.g., statement, question) and language used by legislators (Bergström & Boréus, 2017), as well as the discursive strategies employed (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016).

Table 3 shows the discursive strategies we examine for each sub-question. A discursive strategy is an “intentional plan of practice... adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 33). Prior research suggests that, in this discourse, legislators may use their interactions with witnesses to develop better understanding of an issue and potential solutions and/or advance policy priorities and ideological preferences (Caplan, 1979; Hess, 2008a, 2008b; Hird, 2009; Ness, 2010; Rigby, 2005; Tseng, 2012; Weiss, 1979).

Interpretation in discourse analysis requires consideration of both explicit and implicit meaning, as well as subjective judgment (Bergström & Boréus, 2017). To improve the reliability and trustworthiness of results, the first and second authors separately reviewed each transcript. Each author identified and recorded segments of the transcripts that addressed each of the five sub-questions. The two authors then compared and discussed the results of their independent analyses to identify patterns and, thus, answer the second research question. Using this approach, we developed a shared and nuanced understanding of the micro and macro levels of the discourse.

Studies that use Critical Discourse Analysis are often limited by the failure to recognize the role of the researcher in creating meaning (Rogers et al., 2005). As we engaged in separate

reviews and compared results of our independent analyses, we were self-reflective about the perspectives that we bring to the interpretation. All three authors have studied theories and research on public policymaking and conducted policy-related research. The lead author was a witness at three hearings included in the study. Both the lead and second author have master's degrees in public policy (and doctorates in education). As education researchers, we also have an interest in seeing academic research used to inform federal policymaking. To make visible our analytic choices and encourage readers to draw their own interpretations, we show quotes that support our conclusions in the findings section of this manuscript and provide additional supporting documentation in an online appendix (Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017).

## **Findings**

### **Power to decide who is allowed to contribute**

Consistent with the norms and conventions of this genre of discourse, legislators (and committee staff) have the power to determine whether and when academic researchers are witnesses in a legislative hearing. The 56 hearings held between May 20, 2009 and April 30, 2016 included 247 total witnesses and 210 unique witnesses. Of the 247 total witness slots, 64 were filled by 26 individuals who testified at more than one hearing. Nineteen individuals were witnesses at two hearings, four individuals were witnesses at three hearings, two were witnesses at four hearings, and one was a witness at five hearings.<sup>3</sup> The counts that follow focus on witness slots rather than unduplicated counts to portray the relative emphasis on contributions from academics across the 56 hearings.

At least one academic was included as a witness in 34% (19 of 56) of hearings (Table 1). Table 2 shows that 22 of 247 (9%) of witnesses were academics, defined as faculty and/or deans working at four-year colleges and universities.<sup>4</sup> Legislators may have also sought research-based



perspectives from the witnesses who were affiliated with policy and research institutes (e.g., Center for American Progress, American Council of Trustees and Alumni,  $n=48$ ), foundations ( $n=5$ ), federal government research and accountability agencies (e.g., Government Accountability Office,  $n=15$ ), and membership groups representing states (e.g., National Governors Association,  $n=5$ ), colleges and universities (e.g., Association of American Universities,  $n=9$ ), college access, enrollment, and financial aid functions (e.g. Council for Opportunity in Education,  $n=10$ ), and other institutional staff (e.g., American Association of University Women,  $n=2$ ).

Five of 22 academic slots were filled by individuals who were witnesses at two (Baum, Heller, Scott-Clayton) or three (Perna) hearings, for an unduplicated number of academic witnesses across the 56 hearings of 17. The 17 unique academic witnesses hailed from 16 colleges and universities, with ten from nine private universities (Columbia, George Washington, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University, Penn [ $n=2$ ], Rice, Tulane, Vanderbilt) and seven from public universities (Arizona State, Georgia Tech, Michigan State, Ohio, Temple, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin). Most (16 of the 22 academic witness slots) held senior positions, including dean/professor ( $n=4$ ), associate dean/professor ( $n=2$ ), professor ( $n=8$ ), and emeritus professor ( $n=2$ ); only three were assistant professors. Three of the 22 academic witness slots were associate professors at the time of their testimony, but one of these three also held an endowed chair. The most common disciplinary affiliation was education (10 of 22 slots), with other academic witnesses hailing from economics and education ( $n=2$ ), economics ( $n=5$ ), computer science, engineering, finance, law, and psychology. Academic witnesses most commonly participated in hearings related to HEA's Title IV (Student Assistance), with 13 of 22 academic witness slots and 11 of 19 hearings with at least

one academic witness in hearings on such topics as affordability and student aid, loans, Pell Grants, student aid-general provisions, and TRIO and GEAR UP (Table 1).

### **Other sources of power for legislators embedded in the context of legislative hearings**

Several other aspects of Congressional legislative hearings provide indirect (or context-setting) power to legislators in their discourse with witnesses. First, legislators know the perspectives that witnesses will offer prior to a hearing. Committee staff interview prospective witnesses as part of the process of determining the witnesses who are selected. If selected, witnesses are required to submit testimony several days prior to the hearing. Legislators (and their staff) read testimony prior to the hearing (as stated by Senator Harkin, 1/16/2014) and presumably come to a hearing with prepared remarks and a strategy for using their finite time. The committee chair, and then the ranking member, offer the opening remarks for each hearing, and the ranking member, followed by the committee chair, provide the closing remarks, thereby providing opportunity to selectively emphasize and/or reframe witness remarks.

Second, witnesses may only contribute to a hearing in ways that are consistent with the norms for this genre of discourse. Of particular consequence are the time limits that are structured into a hearing and closely monitored (via a green, yellow, and red lighting system). Each witness may offer up to five minutes for oral testimony, with the expectation that these remarks draw from written testimony provided in advance of the hearing. Following the testimony of all witnesses, the ranking member and each committee member in attendance may use up to five minutes for some combination of their own statement, undirected questions to any witness, and questions to particular witnesses.<sup>5</sup> Limits on the time allotted to each legislator influence discursive practices, with some legislators, for example, explicitly asking witnesses for brief responses to their queries (e.g., Foxx, 3/13/2013). These norms also give legislators the

power to silence or ignore a witness, as a legislator may allow a witness limited time to respond or not direct any questions to them.

Third, while witnesses must be present for a hearing in its entirety, legislators often move in and out of hearings to attend other meetings. Committee members attend hearings for varying lengths of time and the precise number of legislators present at any given time is difficult to discern from transcripts. Joining a hearing only to mark their place in the queue and then returning to use their allotted five-minutes for public statements or questions suggests the power of a legislator to control their engagement in a hearing.<sup>6</sup>

### **How do legislators refer to academic witnesses linguistically?**

As detailed in Appendix B.1, legislators use several nomination strategies to construct the social identity of academic witnesses in their linguistic references. Transcripts refer to academic witnesses as “Mr.” or “Ms.,” but in their oral remarks, legislators stress the educational qualifications of academic witnesses, referring to them as “Dr. [Witness name]” or “Doctor.” In their brief introductions of academic witnesses at the start of a hearing, legislators consistently mention the academic rank, discipline, and institution of an academic witness and, on occasion, books and other signals of research expertise. In the following example, the committee chair implies the research credentials of a witness by also mentioning a federally-funded research project:

Next we have Dr. Douglas Harris. Dr. Harris is an associate professor of economics, University Endowed Chair in Public Education, and founder and director of the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University. With a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences, Dr. Harris is leading

a large randomized trial of “a Promise College Scholarship” in Milwaukee Public Schools. (Harkin, Senate, 1/16/2014)

Legislators also disclose non-academic-research credentials in their introductions of academic witnesses, including affiliations with professional societies and policy institutes. Committee chair Harkin states that New York University Dean Mary Brabeck is “a professor of applied psychology,” but emphasizes that she will speak on accreditation issues given her role as “the elected chair of directors of the Council on Accreditation of Educators” (Senate, 3/25/2014). Committee chair Kline notes that, “Dr. Sandy Baum currently serves as a research professor at the George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development and a senior fellow at the Urban Institute” (House, 11/13/2013). Committee chair Foxx states that, before his current role with the College of Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Dr. Charles Lee Isbell “spent four years with AT&T Labs Research” (Foxx, House, 9/18/2013).

Occasionally, legislators draw attention to the state or regional connections that they share with a witness. Senator Casey uses a shared home-state connection with an academic witness to mention an initiative at an institution (Temple University) in the state both he and the witness represent (Pennsylvania, Senate, 5/20/2015). Representative Walberg uses a shared home-state connection to imply his understanding of the issues facing Michigan college students:

Dr. Heller, it is good to see Michigan State here and appreciate the work that you do. In the coming weeks the[re] will be a lot of high school students in Michigan that will be looking at Michigan State and many this coming fall will be matriculating into the school. (Walberg, House, 4/24/2013)

**What characteristics and qualities do legislators attribute to academic witnesses?**

Through the use of predication strategies, legislators characterize both individual academic witnesses and the panels on which they serve as “experts” (see Appendix B.2). In the following example, Committee chair Harkin brands an academic witness “an expert” and also notes his expected contribution to “the discussion:”

First I'd like to introduce Michael Barr, currently a professor at University of Michigan Law School and a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and the Brookings Institution. Mr. Barr is an expert on consumer protection issues and financial regulation and will help lead the discussion on the challenges facing low-income borrowers. (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011; emphasis added)

More commonly, legislators do not distinguish the expertise of academics from that of other witnesses. Across hearings, legislators refer to the witness panel using such adjectives as “distinguished” (e.g., Foxx, House, April 24, 2013; Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011; Alexander, Senate, July 19, 2012; Kline, House, 3/13/2013) and “exceptional” (e.g., Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012). Legislators also imply the value of witness testimony through statements of appreciation and knowledge gained. The following excerpt from chairwoman Foxx’s closing remarks is representative:

I want to thank all of our witnesses here today. You are a distinguished panel, and we very much appreciate your taking the time to appear before the subcommittee today. And you have given us a lot to think about, a lot to read. (House, 12/3/2013)

Articulating a similar sentiment, ranking member Alexander opened the October 31, 2013 Senate hearing by stating, “This is a distinguished panel of people who know what they are talking about, and so, that ought to inform us in terms of what we should be doing and what we ought not be doing.”

## What types of information do legislators solicit from academic witnesses?

As detailed in Appendix B.3, legislators use several information-solicitation strategies in their statements and questions. First, across hearings, legislators commonly invite responses from witnesses. Illustrating this approach, Representative Polis asks, “who would like to address” his question:

How do we also see, or do you have any examples of how this revolution in data-and outcome-based measurements can also influence the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs to improve the quality of teachers in the classroom? Who would like to address that? (Polis, House, 2/27/2014; emphasis added)

Using a similar approach, Senator Murray asks, “Can anybody comment on how that [college scorecard] rating system might affect those institutions?” (Senate, 11/14/2013).

In a variation of this approach, legislators request a response to a particular question from each panelist. The following excerpt is illustrative:

Now I would like to ask each witness if you would answer this question: As the committee begins to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, what are some key principles that should guide how we review and reform federal student aid programs? Please keep in mind we probably have about 3 minutes and there are four of you. So if you could do about 40 seconds, maybe we could get to everyone and we will start with Dr. Lucas and go down. (Foxx, House, 3/13/2013; emphasis added)

In this example, Chairwoman Foxx not only requests views from each witness but also emphasizes a key parameter on the discourse, time limits. In another example of how legislators invite responses while also recognizing time constraints, Senator Franken states: “Because of my time, I'm just going to ask an open-ended question so it won't sound like I ate up the time.

It'll sound like you [the witnesses] ate up the time, because that will be what happened” (Senate, 11/14/2013).

Legislators also use information-solicitation strategies that request that academic witnesses to explain an issue or problem, clarify testimony, respond to testimony from another witness, provide policy recommendations, and identify the pros and cons of a policy proposal.

#### Explain an issue or problem

On occasion, legislators ask academic witnesses questions that seem designed to solicit information that improves understanding of a problem or potential solution. In the following example, Representative Roes asks an academic witness: “How does the Common Core affect teachers in retention, job satisfaction, and so forth?” (Roe to Singer-Gabella, House, 2/27/2014)

In another example, committee chair Harkin articulates his view that financial aid is increasingly awarded based on non-need criteria, but asks the academic witness for insights into “the obstacles” that limit greater emphasis on need-based aid:

We've seen a big move away from need-based aid to merit-based aid. Now, that sounds very nice. We're all for merit. But what it means is a lot of those people that have the merit also come from that upper quartile of income. So now the aid has shifted to that rather than students who are smart, who can go to college, but who come from poor families, but who have the need. So I wonder if you could comment on what you see about that, Dr. Goldrick-Rab. We've heard repeatedly how important need-based aid is for low-income students, that merit-based aid does not promote college attendance. What are the obstacles we face in restoring need-based aid as a priority? (Harkin, 4/16/2013)

#### Confirm or elaborate on testimony

The detail in Appendix B.3 suggests that, more commonly, legislators ask academic witnesses to confirm or elaborate on their testimony. In one example, a legislator asks an academic witness to elaborate on “what is in your head” about “some federal role:”

So what I want to pursue with both of you is the suggestion you are making, Dr. Heller, about some federal role in helping particularly low income schools afford a better college counseling program. So could you talk about it from the perspective of what is in your head, and then Dr. Hurd, what your actual experience is? (Bishop, House, 4/24/2013)

In another exchange, a legislator requests that the witness disclose “the theoretical underpinnings” for analyses presented in the testimony, given the “profound policy implications” of the conclusions:

I looked at the chart that you put at the bottom of page four. If we stuck to the present system, in the 10-year window between 2010 and 2020 the loan program is scored as raising \$96 billion, reducing the deficit by \$96 billion. If we switch to your method, it would be scored as adding \$140 billion to the deficit. So this is a very big deal. It is a quarter of a trillion dollar difference over a 10-year period, which has profound policy implications for how much we charge students and families and what impact it has on taxpayers. So I wanted to get into and understand the theoretical underpinnings.

(Andrews, House, 3/13/2013)

In another hearing, the committee chair asks an academic witness to explain how something mentioned in testimony (simplification) would “work:”

So if we go to simplification as one of our goals here, not just for loans but for others, will that help to stabilize the Pell Grant--keep this kind of thing from going on? And how would that work? (Kline to Baum, House, 11/13/2013)



### Respond to testimony of another witness

Another information-solicitation strategy that legislators use is to ask a witness to respond to the testimony of another witness. In one hearing, committee chair Harkin seeks additional perspectives on an issue, asking, “Any observations, thoughts, on what Mr. Batson just said, anybody?” (Senate, 7/21/2011). In another hearing, Representative Brooks implies his view that there is “a benefit to work study” and then asks whether all witnesses “agree in the benefits of a work study program:”

I am curious, however, whether or not you all agree in the benefits of a work study program or are you opposed to work study? I am unclear. I heard some of you say that you believe that there are benefits to it, but I am curious, rather than, you know, increasing grants and loans and so forth, is there not a benefit to work study? And I am curious why it was eliminated from your study, Ms. Conklin, just out of curiosity.

(Brooks, House, 11/13/2013)

### Propose policy solutions and recommendations

The detail in Appendix B.3 suggests that legislators often ask academic witnesses for policy solutions and recommendations, another type of information-solicitation strategy. In one hearing, chairwoman Foxx asks an academic witness: “What policy changes would you recommend in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to make public/private partnerships easier and more effective?” (Foxx to Barniuk, House, 9/18/2013). In another, a legislator asks for recommendations “beyond the tools currently available:”

One of the questions I often have is how we as policymakers can empower students to be good consumers in postsecondary education, in higher education, you know, whether it is a certificate program, whether it is associate degree, whether it is a four-year, whether it

is graduate studies. So beyond the tools currently available by the Department of Education, what recommendations could you make? (Thompson to Baum, House, 11/13/2013)

In another hearing, Senator Harkin acknowledges that the academic witness has “explain[ed]” the role of need-based aid but asks him to “describe what we [Congress] can do” and “what we can do to encourage them to focus more on need-based” aid:

Dr. Heller, we will start with you. Your testimony explains that a better way to encourage access and completion is to focus on need-based aid. Two days ago, the *New York Times* reported that the percentage of students receiving merit aid grew so rapidly from 1995 to 2008 that, by 2008, it was equal to the percentage of students receiving need-based aid. They also said that even public universities, despite State budget cuts, continued to offer merit aid to try to attract high achieving students without considering their financial need. Can you describe what we can do to encourage schools to use their limited resources on more need-based aid, and why it is important to do so? You have mentioned in your testimony that 30 percent of grants by State, 55 percent of grants by institutions have no means testing. Why is it important, and what can we do to encourage them to focus more on need-based? (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012; emphasis added)

Identify pros and cons of a proposal:

In a final type of information-solicitation strategy, legislators ask academic witnesses to articulate strengths and weaknesses of policies. In the following passage, committee chair Kline asks for comments on “an interest rate cap” on income-based repayment options:

Mr. Delisle, you were very clear in what you thought about caps in light of the various repayment options, income-based repayment options and so forth. You were pretty clear.

I would like to hear from the other three of you, or just sort of quickly, the pros and cons of putting an interest rate cap. Dr. Lucas? (Kline, House, 3/13/2013)

In another hearing, Senator Alexander indicates his interest in advancing a risk-sharing policy but requests that the academic witness comment on potential unintended consequences:

This [risk-sharing] is an important subject. It's one on which the committee is looking for answers, and for my way of thinking, it's one we're likely to very seriously consider incorporating. I also think it's one where we need to be careful because when we're talking about such large amounts of money and so many individuals, there are almost certain to be unintended consequences from whatever we do, so I'd like to do it carefully. Dr. Webber, for example, you talked about one unintended consequence which you found in your research paper might be that we might raise tuition. Another might be that we might find schools dropping out of the loan program. For example, Tennessee has 13 community colleges. Four do not participate, two are dropping out now... Are we likely to see -- would one effect of a risk-sharing program be to cause many of the 2,000 community colleges, for example, to drop out? (Alexander, Senate, 5/20/15)

### **How do legislators frame the comments received from academic witnesses?**

A discursive strategy that may position academic witnesses as independent experts is a general invitation to witnesses for their perspectives. Nonetheless, the detail in Appendix B.4 suggests that legislators more commonly frame queries to witnesses within claims of truth or rightness, a discursive strategy that positions academics as experts who validate legislators' priorities.

Invite witnesses to offer any perspective

Legislators may position academic witnesses as independent experts when they provide a general invitation to witnesses to offer their perspectives. Different from inviting witnesses to respond to a particular query, this strategy is typically used at the end of a hearing, when a committee chair asks, in his/her closing remarks, whether any witnesses have any additional perspectives to contribute. In an example of this approach, Committee chair Harkin asks:

Before we close I'd like to go down the panel for any last thoughts. As I said at the beginning, I wanted to have a general discussion. I think we had a pretty good discussion on outcomes, disclosure standards, incentives and I just wondered if anybody had any last thoughts, maybe something we haven't even brought up or discussed yet that you might want to say before we leave here. (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)

Also suggesting an interest in ensuring that witnesses have an opportunity to have their views fully included, committee chairs consistently state in their concluding statements something to the effect that they will leave the record “open for 14 days to allow statements, questions for the record, and other extraneous material referenced during the hearing to be submitted in the official hearing record” (Foxy, House, 4/24/2013).

#### Frame within claim of truth or rightness

More commonly, legislators position academic witnesses as experts who validate legislators’ priorities and preferences. A typical approach is for legislators to frame their queries to witnesses in ways that reflect their own view of the causes or relevant dimensions of an issue or ideal solution, what Reisigl and Wodak (2016) refer to as claims of truth and rightness. Illustrating this approach, Senator Murray offers a perspective that pushes back on the testimony of an academic witness (as “students and families in my state tell me”...) and then asks a

question that encourages the witness to agree with her that “we [should] be providing additional support:”

Dr. Scott-Clayton, I wanted to come back to you. You noted that the Pell grant can cover tuition and fees for some students like those who enroll at community colleges, and more students ought to recognize just how affordable college really is. Students and families in my state tell me that tuition isn't their only expense. It's, in fact, less than half of what they have to pay just to survive. The Federal data that I see shows that students from the lowest income families have to pay almost \$12,000 a year for college after the grant aid. I wanted to ask you do you think we have done enough to make college more affordable, or should we be providing additional support for low-income students? (Murray , Senate, 6/3/2015; emphasis added)

In another hearing, committee chair Harkin asks an academic witness to draw on “the research that you’ve done” to provide an argument that supports his view that the federal and state government should “partner in college affordability,” rather than ranking member Alexander’s argument that Medicaid is the reason states are disinvesting in higher education.

I wanted to ask Dr. Perna just one last question on this. On Federal-State partnerships here, I know that my friend, Senator Alexander, has talked about the Medicaid problems. I don’t think we need to debate that here. We’ve debated that a lot in the past, I think. But what I want to know from you is, tell me again in your own words and the research that you’ve done, why a State-Federal partnership is needed for college affordability in the context of State disinvestment. I don’t want to get into this whole Medicaid thing, but the fact is—and we’ve had the data to show, that States have been disinvesting. Dr. Kaler

talked about what happened in Minnesota. In the past, if a student brought a dollar, the State brought two dollars. Today, if a student brings a dollar, the State brings 50 cents.

Mr. KALER. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The State has been disinvesting. So why is it so important for the Federal Government and the State government to partner in college affordability?”

(Harkin, Senate, 7/24/2014; emphasis added)

In another hearing, Senator Baldwin frames a query that encourages an academic (Dr. Webber) and another witness (Ms. Wang) to offer views that “speak to the importance of the Perkins Loan program,” a program that she positions as “successfully helping students:”

We've heard a lot about the need for colleges and universities to have skin in the game when it comes to student loan debt and default rates, with a focus on accountability metrics, and I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight a risk-sharing program that's been in place for many years, the Federal Perkins Loan program. In this campus-based loan program, participating schools share the risk by providing a one-third match to the Federal funding, and loans are made using funds repaid from previous borrowers, which encourages the institution to keep their default rates as low as possible. As a campus-based program, Perkins also allows institutions to target aid to those students most in need. In my home State of Wisconsin, the Perkins program provides more than 15,000 students, those students having exceptional need, with more than \$28 million in aid, and the default rate has been less than 8 percent. This program has been successfully helping students since 1958 but will expire this September if Congress does not take action to continue it. I want to start with Ms. Wang and Dr. Webber, if you could speak to the importance of the Perkins Loan program both in helping low-income students and in

providing a model of institutions engaging in risk-sharing. Are there ways we could build on this longstanding program? (Baldwin, Senate, 5/20/2015; emphasis added)

### **How do legislators amplify and mitigate statements of academic witnesses?**

Legislators may amplify academic witnesses' role as independent experts by requesting their research-based insights. As detailed in Appendix B.5, legislators also use discursive strategies that: 1) amplify academics' role as experts who confirm preferred priorities (by selectively highlighting witness testimony and encouraging confirmation of preferred priorities), and 2) mitigate their expertise (by disagreeing with their testimony).

#### Strategies that amplify the role of academics as independent experts

In several hearings, legislators explicitly ask for research-based knowledge. In a hearing that included one academic researcher (Dr. Deborah Lucas) and three representatives of policy and research institutes, Representative Walberg requested research evidence from all witnesses, saying:

I ask of all of you, if any of you know of any state or any—excuse me—any study showing the relation between the ever increasing higher education costs and the lack of any real present disincentive to student debt. Any studies that show any comparison, any relation of high cost of education versus the student debt? (House, March 13, 2013)

In a field hearing, Senator Casey asks an academic witness for research-based insights:

I wanted to ask you as well on the question of Pell Grants. What is your sense in some of the research you have done other than the obvious question or the obvious challenge of having access to enough sources to fund a higher education? What other lessons can we draw from your research as it relates to Pell Grants? (Casey to Perna, Senate, 10/5/2009)

In another hearing, committee chair Foxx asks an academic witness about “specific gaps... in available research,” asking: “Dr. Perna, what specific gaps do you see in available research regarding the success of college access programs, and what do you see as the repercussions of these gaps in terms of best serving low-income and first-generation students? (House, 4/30/2015). But, during her closing remarks, chairwoman Foxx seems to discount the witness’ discussion of gaps in research-based knowledge, stating: “And, Dr. Perna, while I am a big proponent of doing more research, and particularly honing in on what works and what doesn't work, in many cases we know what works and what doesn't work” (House, 4/30/2015). Strategies that amplify the role of academics as experts who confirm priorities and mitigate their role as independent experts

Legislators also use strategies that amplify the positioning of academics as witnesses who confirm legislators’ preferences (by selectively highlighting witness testimony and encouraging confirmation of preferred policy priorities) and that mitigate academics’ expertise (by disagreeing with or discounting testimony that is inconsistent with their priorities).

#### Selectively highlight witness testimony

One strategy that amplifies academic witnesses as experts who validate a legislator’s priorities is selectively repeating information from witness testimony. In one hearing, Representative Bonamici draws attention to a “concern that [he] share[s],” stating: “Dr. Heller, I especially appreciated in your testimony where you raised some concern that I share about the problems of valuing a college based on the wages of an individual upon graduation” (Bonamici, House, 4/24/2013). In another hearing, Senator Bennet interrupts an academic witness (Dr. Koerner) to highlight a point that is consistent with his own perspective:



Ms. KOERNER. I think that it really rests, if you're looking for measures, in partnerships. We don't prepare teachers by ourselves. I think what keeps being brought up is this ivory tower and courses that don't matter and all that, and those of us who think deeply about this and put it into practice don't think that way. We are in partnership with school districts.

Senator BENNET. Let's rest there for a minute. That's a very, very important point to me, because I've seen the same thing that you've seen. So we should be asking ourselves, both in terms of the ESEA reauthorization and the Higher Ed reauthorization—which, in my mind, shouldn't be two separate things, but there's nothing we can do about that. It is what it is—whether or not we are incentivizing those kinds of partnerships. (Senate, 3/25/2014)

Encourage confirmation of a preferred view or policy priority

Another strategy that amplifies the positioning of academic witnesses as experts who confirm legislators' priorities is using allotted time to encourage witnesses to verbalize agreement with a particular conclusion. Senator Bennet uses this approach to get agreement from a panel that includes two academic witnesses (Scott-Clayton and Long) for a view that he and Senator Alexander share:

Senator BENNET. Following up on what Senator Alexander was asking, given what you guys all said about the information that's required, do we even need a FAFSA form, do you think? I mean, could we get rid of it all together?

Ms. CONKLIN. Absolutely.

Senator BENNET. Is that the view of everybody on the panel?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Yes.

Ms. COOK. Yes.

Ms. LONG. Pretty much.

Senator BENNET. Senator Alexander asked the question, but he didn't get an answer. So there's an answer. There's another consensus. And I think it would be a worthy project for this committee if we were able to actually get rid of that document. (Senate, 11/14/2013)

Providing another example of a legislator's efforts to elicit voiced agreement with a preferred conclusion, Senator Scott repeats his question to an academic witness:

Mr. SCOTT. Dr. Perna, you mentioned the financial aid form. Are people actually not filling it out because of the complications?

Ms. PERNA. Yes. There is some evidence that suggests that low-income students who are eligible to receive a Pell Grant attend college but they haven't applied for the aid.

Mr. SCOTT. Is that because of the complication of the form? (House, 4/30/2015)

#### Disagree with or discount witness testimony

A discursive strategy that legislators use to mitigate an academic's independent expertise is to disagree with or discount their testimony. In the following exchange, Representative Andrews structures an exchange with an academic witness to raise questions about the witness' source of data, and, consequently, the witness' credibility.

Mr. ANDREWS. Dr. Vedder, I want to ask you one thing. You testified that the CBO score for the savings on direct loans did not take into account additional administrative costs or foregone corporate tax revenues. What is the source of your testimony for that statement?

Mr. VEDDER. I received that information from members of the minority.

Mr. ANDREWS. But do you know, independently know it is true?

Mr. VEDDER. I have not first-hand, scored it, and in my full testimony I made it very clear that I understand -

Mr. ANDREWS. Have you read the CBO documents that underscored this?

Mr. VEDDER. I have looked at them; I have not read them carefully.

Mr. ANDREWS. So are you sure that what you said is right?

Mr. VEDDER. I am not sure I am sounding right, but neither are you.

Mr. ANDREWS. I am not- that is why I am asking. You made the statement that they did not take into account administrative costs or foregone tax?

Mr. VEDDER. The scoring on things like - I am an economist, Representative Andrews, and I understand that the people at CBO are honest people. I am not saying that -

Mr. ANDREWS. They sure are.

Mr. VEDDER. And they are good people. They are professional people. I used to work with them. But economists make mistakes and if you look at, for example, default rates, can you predict default rates?

Mr. ANDREWS. My time is up, but I just want to be clear that you don't know whether that is true or not, right?

Mr. VEDDER. I don't know that it is true. (House, 5/21/2009)

In another example, a legislator first cuts off an academic witness and then refers to testimony from another witness to communicate his view that a particular action will “reduce the total amount of aid that is available to students.”

Mr. BISHOP. If I may, but if we go to one grant, one loan, one work, which is what I am hearing, one grant presumably is Pell, right? And unless we are going to restructure the

way we award Pell, then, that is going to money that, I mean--and yes, we are going to add to the funding for it, but that is money that is going to be available to the student up front.

Ms. BAUM. No, so my proposal would put money in the institutions that they could use to give institutional grants to students. It wouldn't interfere with the--

Mr. BISHOP. I am not trying to be argumentative. So you are not, then, advocating one grant, one loan, one work?

Ms. BAUM. In my view, I am advocating one grant to students from the federal government.

Mr. BISHOP. Now I am thoroughly lost, but with this as a discussion perhaps we can continue. I want to go to a point that Ms. Mishory made, which I think is really, really important and none of us should lose sight of this. What you said--what I heard you say--was that the aid process ought to be simpler. I think we all agree with that. But we ought not to reduce supporting--we ought not to reduce the total amount of student financial aid that is available. And I think what is important for us to all recognize is that is precisely what we are doing. We are reducing the total amount of aid that is available to students.  
(House, 11/13/2013)

### **Discussion**

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis to explain how members of Congress use the power of their positions to determine the role and contributions of academic researchers in one component of the federal education policymaking process (and one genre of discourse): Congressional legislative hearings. Consistent with Hay's (1997) conceptualization, legislators use the power of their positions (as executed within the norms and expectations of this genre of

discourse) to determine whether and when to include the views of academic researchers. Many educational researchers conduct research with the hope that their research-based insights will be used by policymakers (Perna, 2016). And, academic researchers may be expected to offer perspectives that are independent from a larger political agenda (Verger et al., 2018). But, legislators included only a relatively small number of academics in the identified Congressional hearings (22 of 247 witness slots).

Legislators also use the power of their positions within the norms of this sociocultural context to select discursive strategies that determine the contributions of the academic researchers who are included. Some of the discursive strategies employed by legislators convey a valuing of academics' research expertise and credentials. Although not typically linguistically differentiating the expertise of academics from other witnesses, legislators use nomination strategies that recognize academics' educational degrees ("Doctor") and predication strategies that label the panels on which academics serve as "distinguished." But, examining these micro events in isolation, without attention to other aspects of the discourse, does not reveal whether legislators are using their positions to depict academic witnesses as experts who are independent or as experts who are validating legislators' views.

Some of the discursive practices that legislators employ appear to portray academic witnesses as experts who offer independent perspectives. Legislators amplify the contributions of academic witnesses as independent experts when they explicitly ask for research-based insights and encourage academic witnesses to voice their perspectives. Legislators may also paint academics as independent experts when they ask academic witnesses for explanations for an issue or problem, elaboration of testimony, a response to testimony from another witness, potential policy solutions and recommendations, and the pros and cons of a policy proposal.

Nonetheless, when interpreted in light of CDA's assumption that language reflects a point of view (Bergström, Ekström, & Boréus, 2017), these information-solicitation strategies may actually be mechanisms that legislators use to characterize academics as witnesses who validate preferred priorities. A critical analysis requires interpreting the micro-level exchanges of legislators in light of the macro structures of the discourse, in this case, the legislative hearing. Particularly relevant in this context are legislators' power to determine who is permitted to testify at a hearing, as well as whether to use their allotted time to ask questions of all witnesses, ask questions of one or two witnesses, or ask no questions and instead make a statement. Per the norms of this type of discourse, legislators also know the perspectives witnesses will offer in advance of the hearing. As such, a legislator may only target information-solicitation strategies to academic witnesses when the legislator expects the witness to produce statements that are consistent with the legislator's preferred views.

Other discursive practices reflect the direct power of legislators to portray academic witnesses as experts who validate legislators' preferences. These practices include selectively highlighting testimony with which the legislator agrees and steering witnesses to verbalize agreement with a particular policy or approach. Legislators can also directly advance preferred policies by using discursive practices that mitigate the contributions of academic witnesses with whom they disagree (e.g., through exchanges that call into question some aspect of witness testimony).

Recognizing that, per the norms of this genre of discourse, legislators exert power by determining who is invited to testify at a hearing, future research should probe the processes that legislators (and especially committee chairs, ranking members, and their staff) use to select witnesses. In the hearings examined in this study, legislators allocated considerably fewer

witness slots to academics than to representatives from issue-oriented policy, research, and advocacy institutes (22 versus 48) and other organizations that may contribute research-based insights (e.g., various membership groups). Further illustrating the narrowness of the pool of included academics, four of the academic witnesses testified at more than one of the identified hearings. Hearing transcripts identify academic witnesses who accepted invitations to testify, but provide no information about academics who may have been considered but not chosen or who were invited to participate but declined. Future research should explore how legislators (and staff) identify and select from among potential academic and non-academic witnesses, as well as the influence of formal (e.g., Scholars Strategy Network) and informal organizations and networks in determining whose academic voices are included.

More research is also required to understand the views that are not included in legislative hearings and the implications of this exclusion for federal policymaking. Suggesting the importance of organizational resources in supplying and positioning academic knowledge for the consumption of policymakers (e.g., Leyden, 1995) and/or legislators' preferencing of experts from elite institutions and positions, the included academic researchers were disproportionately in senior positions and employed by the nation's most prestigious research universities. Because of data limitations, we were unable to consider how the inclusion of academic witnesses varies based on demographic or other characteristics of legislators or witnesses or how legislators' discursive practices may vary based on these and other characteristics. We also did not consider non-verbal communication strategies. Future research should explore these issues.

Also worthy of further inquiry are the topics on which legislators ask academics to testify. Academic witnesses are more commonly included in hearings on topics pertaining to student financial aid. This finding is not surprising, given the importance of Title IV (student

assistance) to HEA and the large number of academic researchers in education, economics, and other disciplines who have related expertise to contribute. (For example, the four issues of *Higher Education Abstracts*<sup>7</sup> published in 2016 included abstracts for 18 studies related to financial aid.) But, this finding also raises questions. For instance, why do legislators not include more academics in hearings on other topics? What might researchers who conduct research on student aid and other topics do to be included in future hearings? How might AERA and other associations of academic researchers increase the production of policy-relevant research on the full range of topics in which federal policymakers are interested? Additional research should also consider whether inclusion of academic researchers in legislative hearings varies based on characteristics of the topic, particularly the degree of politicization of an issue. Some research suggests that, after charter schools were framed as partisan issue, “pressure increased to simplify research claims, cherry pick studies, and aggressively discredit research and researchers whose work was cited by those on ‘the other side’” (Henig, 2009, p. 147).

Also unexamined in this study is how legislators interpret and use research and other information solicited from academic witnesses to craft and enact legislation and engage in other aspects of policymaking. As of this writing, HEA has not yet been reauthorized. Thus, we do not know how the positioning of academic researchers identified in this study contributed to actual policy outcomes. We also do not know how testimony from academic researchers may have contributed to redefining legislators’ preferences. While this study focused on legislators’ queries of academics, it may be that academic witnesses’ testimony influences legislators’ understandings and future queries. The use of predication strategies that characterize academics and other witnesses as “experts” suggests the possibility that the testimony of a witness may change a legislator’s views.



Using bibliometric methods, one study found that, compared to research cited in reports by intermediary organizations, research cited in academic reports is more commonly peer-reviewed, less self-referential, and a more balanced reflection of the state of available knowledge (Verger et al., 2018). Future research should consider whether and how legislators differentiate the contributions of academic researchers from the contributions of other witnesses, particularly other witnesses with research expertise. Attention to the positioning of witnesses from policy, research, and advocacy organizations also merits consideration, especially given the diversity of perspectives offered by these organizations. While some (e.g., Brookings Institution) tout non-partisan, research-based contributions, others (e.g., Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights) have explicit advocacy missions. Future research might also consider variations in legislators' use of research based on the strategies academics use to communicate data and research findings (Birkland, 2016).

The findings from this study also have implications for academics who seek to improve connections between research and policy. Other scholars have established that, to be used, academic research must be relevant to the knowledge needs of policymakers (Brownson et al., 2006; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2008; Head, 2010; Rigby, 2005; Weiss, 1977). The findings from this study suggest that academic researchers are more likely to be included in hearings when their perspectives validate or confirm the preferences and priorities of committee chairs and/or ranking members. We do not interpret this finding as meaning that academic researchers should tailor their work to try to anticipate what legislators want to hear. It may be, for example, that the research of academics has informed the issues that legislators seek to discuss in a hearing and that a legislative hearing provides an opportunity for public confirmation of the wisdom of this approach.

Whether policymakers use academic research depends not only on relevancy but also accessibility. To promote the use of their research, academics must communicate findings and articulate policy implications (Head, 2010). Legislators in the hearings in this study mentioned evidence – anecdotal and research-based alike – that they obtained through higher education trade and national media.<sup>8</sup> These findings suggest that academic researchers may increase the accessibility and reach of their research if they can gain interest in their findings from popular and trade media. Social media and other new technologies may facilitate efforts by academics to communicate and disseminate their research. But, these technologies also enable other individuals and organizations to advance their own perspectives (Henig, 2008; Hess, 2008a; Hird, 2009; Lubienski, Scott & DeBray, 2014; Goldie, Linick, Jabbar & Lubienski, 2014; Perna, 2016). And, use of social media may also shift an academic’s reputation from independent expert to advocate (Thomason, 2016). Given that few witness slots are allocated to academic researchers during legislative hearings, another strategy for advancing the use of research may be for academic researchers to communicate research results and implications to individuals and organizations that are often called to testify including policy and research institutes and membership organizations (e.g., American Council on Education, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators).

The findings from this study may also be useful to academics who are called to testify in a legislative hearing. Witnesses must be prepared for the social practices and discursive norms of Congressional legislative hearings. More specifically, witnesses must be prepared to offer succinct statements, both in their formal testimony and responses to legislators’ queries, given time-limits that are structured into the discourse. Academic witnesses should also recognize the power of legislators to determine the questions asked, and be ready to respond to legislators’

information-solicitation strategies, particularly requests for policy recommendations and critiques of policy options. And witnesses should be prepared to explain research design and findings, especially as legislators with opposing preferences and views have power to use discursive strategies that may mitigate an academic's expertise or discount research-based contributions that do not support the legislator's priorities and preferences.

### **Concluding Note**

Academics who wish to connect research-based findings to policy should be encouraged by this study's findings: legislators value the expertise of academic witnesses. A related challenge, however, is to be one of the relatively few who is invited to contribute. Academics who participate in hearings must recognize that legislators not only have power to determine whose views are (and are not) contributed but also the power to use discursive strategies that can depict academic witnesses not as independent experts but as experts who confirm legislators' priorities. At least some portrayal of academic witnesses as validators of legislators' views is inevitable, given the interest of legislators in using hearings to advance their policy goals and ideological preferences and norms and social practices of this genre of discourse. But, if the policies that are advanced and ultimately enacted are consistent with findings from rigorous, theoretically-grounded research, then academic research has played a constructive role and made a positive contribution to the federal policymaking process and public good (Henig, 2009).

### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> The Committee on Education and Workforce was previously named the Committee on Education and Labor. The Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development was

previously named the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness.

<sup>2</sup> The 2008 law, the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315), has eight titles. These titles define the characteristics of higher education institutions eligible for various federal programs, and authorize programs pertaining to teacher quality enhancement, institutional aid (including aid for various categories of minority-serving institutions), student assistance, developing institutions, international education programs, and graduate and postsecondary improvement programs. Title IV, student assistance, is the largest section of the law, with sections on Grants to Students (e.g., Federal Pell Grants, TRIO programs), Federal Family Education Loans, Federal Work-Study Programs, Federal Direct Student Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, Need Analysis, Program Integrity, and more.

<sup>3</sup> James Runcie, COO of Federal Student Aid at the Department of Education, and Robert Shireman were witnesses at four hearings. Shireman testified as both Undersecretary of Education and a consultant to California Competes. Kathleen Tighe, then Inspector General of the Department of Education, testified at five hearings.

<sup>4</sup> None of the witnesses in our sample of hearings was a faculty member at a community college. As shown in Table 1, witnesses included other representatives from community colleges.

<sup>5</sup> The order of legislators' questioning is determined by seniority and order of arrival. Total hearing time is typically 90 to 120 minutes.

<sup>6</sup> Relatively few legislators attend field hearings (7 of the 56 hearings and 1 of the 19 hearings with an academic witness were field hearings). No other senator attended the field hearing with an academic witness (hosted by Senator Casey, 10/5/2009).

<sup>7</sup> *Higher Education Abstracts* (n.d.) is a quarterly compilation of abstracts from “more than 200 journals in the fields of education, computer sciences, management, psychology, sociology, and law,” as well as from books, reports, and papers presented at scholarly conferences.

<sup>8</sup> Legislators often mention in their remarks and framing of questions to witnesses findings from a study or report. In the selected hearings, legislators mention an academic researcher by name (e.g., Richard Vedder, a prior witness, House, 4/16/2013), a study by an (unnamed) researcher at a particular academic institution (e.g., “that study at Stanford,” House, 4/16/2013; “a professor from the University of Michigan,” House, 11/19/2013), and research from a research center (e.g., Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce). Legislators also draw on data to support their arguments, identifying such sources as articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (e.g., House, 5/21/2009), *Inside Higher Ed* (House, May 21, 2009), and *New York Times* (House, 4/24/2013; Senate, 7/19/2012). Also mentioned are reports issued by policy and research institutes including the Center for American Progress (House, 4/24/2013), Center for Affordability and Productivity (House, 5/21/2009), and National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (Senate, 11/5/2009). Legislators also mention reports from such government agencies as the Congressional Budget Office (House, 3/13/2013) and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (House, 11/13/2013).

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## **Appendix A. Identified Congressional legislative hearings held between August 15, 2008 and April 1, 2016**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Hearing Title</b>
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### **House Committee on Education and Labor**

5/21/09 Increasing Student Aid Through Loan Reform

### **House Committee on Education and the Workforce**

6/17/10 The Department of Education Inspector General's Review of Standards for Program Length in Higher Education

3/17/11 Education Regulations: Roadblocks to Student Choice in Higher Education

3/13/13 Keeping Within Reach: Examining Opportunities to Strengthen Federal Student Loan Programs

7/9/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Improving Higher Education Through Innovation

11/13/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Simplifying Federal Student Aid

4/2/14 Keeping College Within Reach: Meeting the Needs of Contemporary Students

### **Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce**

3/11/11 Education Regulations: Federal Overreach into Academic Affairs

10/25/11 Government-Run Student Loans: Ensuring the Direct Loan Program is Accountable to Students and Taxpayers

11/30/11 Keeping College Within Reach: Discussing Ways Institutions Can Streamline Costs and Reduce Tuition

7/18/12 Keeping College Within Reach: Exploring State Efforts to Curb Costs

4/16/13 Keeping College Within Reach: The Role of Federal Student Aid Programs

4/24/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Enhancing Transparency for Students, Families and Taxpayers

6/13/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Discussing Program Quality through Accreditation

9/11/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Supporting Higher Education Opportunities for America's Servicemembers and Veterans

9/18/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Improving Access and Affordability through Innovative Partnerships

12/3/13 Keeping College Within Reach: Strengthening Pell Grants for Future Generations

1/28/14 Keeping College Within Reach: Sharing Best Practices for Serving Low-Income and First Generation Students

2/27/14 Exploring Efforts to Strengthen the Teaching Profession

3/12/14 Examining the Mismanagement of the Student Loan Rehabilitation Process

3/17/15 Strengthening America's Higher Education System

4/30/15 Improving College Access and Completion for Low-Income and First-Generation Students

9/10/15 Preventing and Responding to Sexual Assault on College Campuses

10/14/09 Ensuring Student Eligibility Requirements for Federal Aid

5/27/10 Examining GAO's Findings on Efforts to Improve Oversight of Low-Income and Minority Serving Institutions

11/18/15 Federal Student Aid: Performance-Based Organization Review

**Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension (Field hearing: Casey)**

10/5/09 Access and Affordability: How Expanding Pell Grants Will Offer Higher Education to More Americans

**Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension**

6/24/10 Emerging Risk? An Overview of the Federal Investment in For-Profit Education  
8/4/10 For-Profit Schools: The Student Recruitment Experience  
9/30/10 The Federal Investment in For-Profit Education: Are Students Succeeding?  
3/10/11 Bridgepoint Education, Inc.: A Case study in For-Profit Education and Oversight  
6/7/11 Drowning in Debt: Financial Outcomes of Students at For-Profit Colleges  
7/21/11 Improving For-Profit Higher Education: A Roundtable Discussion of Policy Solutions  
2/2/12 Innovations in College Affordability  
7/19/12 Making College Affordability a Priority: Promising Practices and Strategies  
9/13/12 Improving College Affordability: A View from the States  
4/16/13 The Challenge of College Affordability: The Student Lens  
9/19/13 The Triad: Promoting a System of Shared Responsibility. Issues for Reauthorization of HEA  
10/31/13 Attaining a Quality Degree: Innovations to Improve Student Success  
11/14/13 Ensuring Access to Higher Education: Simplifying Federal Student Aid for Today's College Student  
12/12/13 Accreditation as Quality Assurance: Meeting the Needs of 21st Century Learning  
1/16/14 Strengthening Federal Access Programs to Meet 21st Century Needs: A look at TRIO and GEAR UP  
2/27/14 Promoting College Access and Success for Students with Disabilities  
3/25/14 Teacher Preparation: Ensuring a Quality Teacher in Every Classroom  
3/27/14 Strengthening the Federal Student Loan Program for Borrowers  
5/13/14 Strengthening MSIs: Best Practices and Innovations for Student Success  
6/26/14 Sexual Assault on Campus: Working to Ensure Campus Safety  
7/24/14 The Role of States and Higher Education  
2/24/15 Recalibrating Regulation of Colleges and Universities: A Report from the Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education  
5/6/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: The Role of Consumer Information in College in Choice  
5/20/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Exploring Institutional Risk-sharing  
6/3/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Ensuring College Affordability  
6/17/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Evaluating Accreditation's Role in Ensuring Quality  
7/22/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Exploring Barriers and Opportunities within Innovation

7/29/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Combating Campus Sexual Assault

8/5/15 Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Opportunities to Improve Student Success

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Appendix B.1. Discursive strategies addressing: How do legislators refer to academic witnesses linguistically? (sub-question 1)

Nomination strategies	Examples
Professional anthroponyms	"Dr." or "Doctor" [not "Mr." or "Ms."]
Anthroponym describing research role	Our final witness on this panel will be Dr. Richard Vedder who is a professor of economics at Ohio University. He is the author of a number of books, including "Going Broke by Degree, Why Colleges Cost Too Much. (Miller, House, 5/21/2009)
	Dr. Deborah Lucas is the Sloan Distinguished Professor Finance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management. (Kline, House, 3/13/2013)
	Dr. Donald Heller is Dean of the College of Education and a professor in the Department of Education Administration at Michigan State University. Prior to his appointment in January 2012, he was director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education and professor of education and senior scientist at the Pennsylvania State University. (Foxx, House, 4/24/2013)
	Dr. Laura Perna is a James S. Riepe professor and founding executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is currently president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Dr. Perna's scholarship focuses on the way social structures, educational purposes, and public policies promote and limit college access and success and has been published in books, journals, and policy reports. (Foxx, House, 4/30/2015)
	On the first panel, from left to right, Dr. Sandy Baum who is an independent higher education analyst/consultant, professor emeritus of economics at Skidmore College. She is the author of The College Board's Annual Trends in Student Aid and Trends in College Pricing and is an expert on college affordability and student debt. (Harkin, Senate, 6/7/2011)
	Dr. Goldrick-Rab is an affiliate of the La Follette School of Public Affairs, the Center on Financial Security, the Institute for Research on Poverty, and she serves as a senior scholar at the Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Post-Secondary Education... She currently holds the William T. Grant Faculty Scholar Award, a 5-year grant facilitating her work on a project titled "Rethinking College Choice in America," and is co-author of Putting Poor People to Work: How the Work First Idea Eroded College Access for the Poor, which was a finalist for the C. Wright Mills Award. Her research has been published in numerous journals and has received support from several foundations. Dr. Goldrick-Rab holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. (Baldwin, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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We welcome our first witness, who is Dr. Bridget Terry Long. Dr. Long is Academic Dean and Xander Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and an economist who specializes in the study of college student access and choice and the factors that influence students' postsecondary and labor market outcomes. In 2010, Dr. Long was appointed by President Obama to serve as a member of the National Board of Education Sciences, the Advisory Panel of the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education, where she has served as board chair since 2011. (Harkin, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Next is Dr. Judith Scott-Clayton, an assistant professor of economics and education at the Teachers College of Columbia University. She is also a senior research associate at the Community College Research Center and a faculty research fellow of the National Bureau of Economic Research. Her research on financial aid simplification, the impact of merit-based scholarships, and the validity of remedial placement exams has received national press coverage and has contributed to ongoing debates regarding financial aid and remediation policy. (Harkin, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Next, we have Dr. Douglas Harris. Dr. Harris is an associate professor of economics, University Endowed Chair in Public Education, and founder and director of the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans at Tulane University. With a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences, Dr. Harris is leading a large randomized trial of, "a Promise College Scholarship" in Milwaukee Public Schools. (Harkin, Senate, 1/16/2014)

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Our final witness would be Dr. Laura Perna. Dr. Perna is executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy and professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. She is past vice president for Postsecondary Education at the American Educational Research Association and is president-elect of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. Her research examines the ways that social structures, educational practices, and public policies promote and limit college access and success, particularly for individuals from lower-income families and ethnic minority groups. Dr. Perna holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master's in Public Policy, and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Michigan. (Harkin, Senate, 7/24/2014)

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Anthroponym  
highlighting  
academic and policy  
institute roles

Dr. Sandy Baum currently serves as a research professor at the George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development and a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. (Kline, House, 11/13/2013)

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Anthroponym  
highlighting  
administrative and  
other roles

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Dr. Charles Lee Isbell serves as a professor and senior associate dean with College of Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Prior to this role, he spent 4 years with AT&T Labs Research. (Fouxx, House, 9/18/2013)

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We also have with us this morning Dr. Marcy Singer-Gabella. She is a professor and associate chair for teacher education in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Vanderbilt University. Before coming to Vanderbilt, she taught high school social studies in New York and worked with the Stanford School's Collaborative Professional Development Center in the California Bay Area. (Rokita, House, 2/27/2014)

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Dr. Mary Brabeck is a professor of applied psychology at New York University. She is currently the elected chair of the board of directors of the Council on Accreditation of Educator Preparation—that's CAEP, as Senator Alexander mentioned—and will speak to CAEP accreditation issues. (Harkin, Senate, 3/25/2014)

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Next is Dr. Mari Koerner, who serves as Professor and Dean of the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. ASU currently has one of the largest title II grants in the Nation, and Dean Koerner will speak to ASU's grant implementation. ASU's education graduate programs have been ranked among the best by U.S. News and World Report for 12 consecutive years. Dr. Koerner serves on the Advisory Board for Teach for America, the Advisory Council for Rodel Charitable Foundation, and on the board of directors for Arizona Business and Education Coalition. (Harkin, Senate, 3/25/2014)

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Relational  
anthroponyms

Dr. Heller, it is good to see Michigan State here and appreciate the work that you do. In the coming weeks the[re] will be a lot of high school students in Michigan that will be looking at Michigan State and many this coming fall will be matriculating into the school. (Walberg, House, 4/24/2013)

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And, Dr. Singer-Gabella, I am from Bowling Green, Kentucky, so just up the road a little bit, so follow metro--a lot of, some of our media is there, and appreciate what Peabody does. (Guthrie, House, 2/27/2014)

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I want to thank our witnesses, especially Dr. Webber, because you're from Temple... I want to direct your attention to a footnote that involves Temple. (Casey, Senate, 5/20/2015)

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Appendix B.2. Discursive strategies addressing: What characteristics do legislators attribute to academic witnesses? (sub-question 2)

Predication strategies	Examples
Expertise of academic witnesses	We are fortunate to have Dr. Marcy Singer-Gabella from Vanderbilt's Peabody College with us today to describe the institution's efforts to ensure students graduate ready to move to the front of the classroom. (Foxx, House, 2/27/2014)
	And next question would be to Dr. Singer-Gabella and then maybe to Ms. Hall. I actually am a Vanderbilt Law School graduate, so I know a little bit about the Peabody School, and obviously it is a fantastic place. (Messer, House, 2/27/2014)
	First, I'd like to introduce Michael Barr, currently a professor at University of Michigan Law School and a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and the Brookings Institution. Mr. Barr an expert on consumer protection issues and financial regulation and will help lead the discussion on the challenges facing low-income borrowers. (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)
	I will start by welcoming our first witness, Dr. Don Heller, who has been dean of the College of Education at Michigan State University since January. Previously, Dr. Heller taught and served as the director of the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State University, and also held a faculty appointment at the University of Michigan. He is well known as an expert on higher education finance and economics, especially financial aid and tuition pricing, widely published in scholarly journals, and his work has been frequently reported on by the media. (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012)
Expertise of witnesses as a collective	"distinguished" panel of witnesses (Foxx, House, 4/24/2013; Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011; Alexander, Senate, 7/19/2012; Kline, House, 3/13/2013; Kline, House, 11/13/2013)
	I think [sic] all of the witnesses for excellent testimony and observing our sophisticated lighting system. (Kline, House, 3/13/2013)
	In closing, I thank our expert witnesses for sharing their views on how the federal government can simplify the federal financial aid process in order to lower costs and improve access to higher education. I think that your presentation was excellent and we thank you for that. (Hinojosa, House, 11/13/2013)
	Today, with the help of our witnesses, we will explore opportunities to streamline the federal aid system, making it easier for students to evaluate federal aid options and make smart investments in postsecondary education. (Kline, House, 11/13/2013)

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And thank you to all the panelists. I really appreciate your years of expertise, and especially thank you for the years that you have spent teaching. It is critical to have teachers and former teachers working to strengthen the profession, so thank you. (Bonamici, House, 2/27/2014)

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I would like to thank the witnesses again for coming. It was very enlightening. I learned a lot. (Rokita, House, 2/27/2014)

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I look forward to hearing from each one of you what other recommendations you as panelists may have to make a college education accessible and affordable to greater numbers of low-income, minority, and first-generation college students. (Hinojosa, House, 4/30/2015)

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I want to thank all of you for great presentations. (Foxy, House, 4/30/2015)

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So, I appreciate you all coming today more than I can tell you, and you have been very kind to share your expertise with us. And I want to thank all of you for your commitment in this area to helping students and to make--and to doing what you can to help other people understand what they can do to help these students, who I think do want to succeed but they do need a lot of guidance. So, thank you very much. (Foxy, House, 4/30/2015)

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My time has expired, but I really want to thank you and the Chairman for this very, very useful testimony. (Blumethal, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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Thank you all very, very much. You have added greatly to this deliberation. Appreciate you being here. Thank you. (Harkin, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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Thank you all for being here today and taking a lot of your time to be here and to share with us. I would say I hope that as we proceed on, that my staff, my professional staff could be in touch with you as we move ahead and start to develop some prospective pathways in which we're going to go and develop some of these things. (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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We have an exceptional panel of witnesses with us today. I want to thank all of you for taking the time to be here and sharing your expertise. (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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I want to thank the chairman for really assembling some folks who know what they're talking about. I think this is very, very helpful to us as we look at this. (Alexander, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Thank you all very much. Those were all very stimulating statements, and your entire statements were also very stimulating. (Harkin, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Now, what can we do about that? We're very fortunate to have these witnesses today, because they've done a lot of the best thinking on it. (Opening remarks by Ranking Member Alexander, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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We have a terrific group of witnesses-many Senators interested-on a subject that a lot of people care about, the cost of attending college. (Alexander, Senate, 6/3/2015)

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Appendix B.3. Discursive strategies addressing: What types of information do they solicit from academic witnesses? (sub-question 3)

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Information-solicitation strategies

Examples

Invite perspectives of witnesses

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Thank you very much. Now I would like to ask each witness if you would answer this question: as the committee begins to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, what are some key principles that should guide how we review and reform federal student aid programs? Please keep in mind we probably have about 3 minutes and there are four of you. So, if you could do about 40 seconds, maybe we could get to everyone and we will start with Dr. Lucas and go down. (Foxx, House, 3/13/2013)

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Now I would like to ask each witness if you would answer this question: as the committee begins to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, what are some key principles that should guide how we review and reform federal student aid programs? (Foxx, House, 3/13/2013)

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I want to talk a little bit--I am not sure who to direct this question to, so I open it to anybody, about the online potential for nontraditional students. (Tierney, House, 9/13/2013)

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And, Ms. Mishory, you specifically talked about that 15 percent not paying, but I would love to hear any of your perspectives on the idea of maybe making it easier to refinance at current rates and what that might be able to do to help overall. (Pocan, House, 11/13/2013)

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And one of the factors, of course, is that in the schools that they have been looking at the barrier to getting into teaching is far higher, they are paid much better, they are highly esteemed, and that is a situation that I think we all talk about, we all want more here, and yet it seems somewhat difficult to have the level of discussion focus as much on some of those areas as what we are talking about, which is equally important. I just wondered about your thoughts on that. As you look to models here in the United States, when you are obviously representing a number of them that are strong, where does that fit? Because the esteem for teachers and what we see sometimes

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as low morale really does factor in here. How important do you think that is? (Davis to panel, House, 2/27/2014)

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How do we also see, or do you have any examples of how this revolution in data-and outcome-based measurements can also influence the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs to improve the quality of teachers in the classroom? Who would like to address that? (Polis, House, 2/27/2014)

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You know, the federal government has invested much time and resources into college access for low-income students. Despite this fact, these students still complete their degrees at lower rates. What can we do to improve the graduation rates for our low-income students? And again, I would throw that out to whoever would like to take that question. (Allen, House, 4/30/2015)

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And, Madam Chair, I want to ask an open question to anyone who will take it during my allotted time. (Curbelo, House, 4/30/2015)

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Senator CASEY. What is striking about your testimony, all three of you, when I read it and when I heard it again, was a couple of problems we highlighted earlier: lots of work hours. I mean, 40 hours and going to school cannot be easy. That is a difficult assignment. Second, one question that keeps coming up in these contexts is out-of-pocket costs. By one measurement, out-of-pocket, meaning the net between—after you subtract the grant dollars—out-of-pocket costs represent—this is a national number for those families that have someone financing higher education. Out-of-pocket costs represent 61.3 percent of total income for low-income families earning less than \$50,000 a year. If you go up a little bit higher on the income scale between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in income for those families financing higher education, just a little less than 23 percent of total income. You can see just by that data how difficult it is for low-income families to afford not just the tuition at a school but also the out-of-pocket costs that go with it. Any of the three of you want to comment on out-of-pocket costs or anything else about something you did not cover or we did not cover earlier? (Casey, Senate, 10/5/2009)

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I would encourage others to respond as well. Are there other good guys that should be encouraged? Should the regulations be strengthened? (Blumethal, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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I just saw a graph today between the demand and the supply of students. Since about 1980, the demand has gone up and the supply is going down, and we're just not getting well-educated people in our country. So, help us out, all of you here. Help us in our thinking. Help us in where we've got to go. Just don't come to this committee and say nothing needs to be done, we're fine the way it is, leave us alone. That's not going to get very far with this committee. So, with that in mind, I thank you all very much. You've been very constructive. Again, I hope we can continue to work with each one of you in moving ahead on trying to make this a better sector for all. Thank you very much. (Chair Harkin in his closing remarks, Senate, 7/19/2011)

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Let me start with four questions. First, what constitutes student success? What constitutes student success at a for-profit college, and what does a successful for-profit college look like? Second, what should students know when they're considering a for-profit school? Is disclosure sufficient? Third, should we have tougher standards for schools? Who should hold them accountable? Are voluntary standards enough? Fourth, are there other ways to realign incentives for better performance? (Chair Harkin's opening remarks, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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And you talked—and I can open this up a little wider to anyone who cares to jump in because it's a roundtable, or square more, really. You were talking about veterans who come out and use all of their G.I. bill. But don't they, in fact, often on top of that, get other loans, and aren't they then, in addition to in many cases wasting their G.I. bill and coming out with nothing, but also put in a position where they owe a great deal of money, and that this is money that—and this again is open to everyone—this is a debt that can't be gotten rid of when you go into bankruptcy? This is a debt that you'll take for life, and we've had other witnesses testify on this issue. And so, I'm sitting here as a Senator and I'm thinking, OK, I'm trying to get our debt down. That's a very important part of our job right now, is getting a handle on our deficits and on our national debt. And for me to see these G.I. bills and the Pell grants going to very, very expensive schools that aren't really doing their job—and I thank Mr. Batson for being here because Regency does a great job; and I thank you, Mr. Hamburger, for being here from DeVry. So, I'm seeing both Federal money, as far as I'm concerned, the taxpayers' money being wasted when we're in this tremendous budget difficulty, and then seeing lives really put into difficult straits. And worse than that, seeing veterans, men and women who have put themselves on the line and see them taken advantage of, and it really makes my blood boil, I must say. What I kind of want to know is—this doesn't just happen to veterans, it happens to many people—how widespread is this that people go to these for-profit schools? Because we've had testimony, and I suppose you could say, "well, that's just a couple, a few people who that's happened to." How widespread is this, for those who have been

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studying the industry? How widespread is that, and if it is widespread, what can we do to prevent that, and why don't the DeVrys and the Regencys of this world, the very good actors or the kind of good actors, why don't they get in there and help us and police their own industry—how could they help do that? (Franken, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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I think it is worth continuing that conversation. I want to turn to the growing examples of free university courses. Public radio had a segment about Coursera this last week where a number of universities have worked together to create free online courses. And I understand someone who was involved at Stanford and Google has left to create a company called Udacity that provides free online courses. But I think even though they are participating in providing these courses as an opportunity for education, there is not a system in which other schools will accept credits from folks who take these. Is that something that should be explored? It is great to have these terrific online courses, but is there a problem in terms of universities being willing to accept them as a source of education? I see, Dr. Twigg, you are nodding your head. Do you want to address that? (Merkley, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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My first question is about online education. My district is the home to the global program of Colorado State University, University of Colorado also has an online program; students across the country. One concern I have is that federal loan programs are still oriented towards the bricks and mortar model with regard to cost of living and other requirements which aren't really applicable for online universities. How do we make sure that federal loans for online courses are treated the same as loans for traditional classes and don't deal with them in a discriminatory way just because some of their cost factors are different? I will open it up to whoever wants to comment on it. Mr. Draeger? (Polis, House, 3/13/2013)

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All right. Good. I have one other quick question. I know the administration is trying to get some feedback now on their college rating system where colleges would be judged on the value that they provide. I have heard some concerns from my State that a rating system could harm institutions that serve a large percentage of disadvantaged students, like our community colleges. Can anybody comment on how that rating system might affect those institutions? (Murray, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Because of my time, I'm just going to ask an open-ended question so it won't sound like I ate up the time. It'll sound like you ate up the time, because that will be what happened. [Laughter.] But say we were to construct something like a competitive grant program to States. Ms. Conklin, you talked about Tennessee, States that are trying to design better outcomes. That's the focus. The focus is better outcomes in terms of kids getting into postsecondary education, making it as

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productive as possible. The best outcomes are what you were talking about. If you were to design a competitive grant program where States would have to apply for it and say, 'This is what we're going to do', what would be the criteria that you would look for if you were going to write let's say someone who was- I don't know, a member of the Senate wanted to write a piece of legislation saying, We're going to do this, and we're going to have some Federal funding for States, and they're going to compete to get this funding to create a program to make better outcomes in their State, like Tennessee is doing. How would you design that? Ms. CONKLIN. Thank you, Senator Franken. Senator FRANKEN. And this is for everyone, and take your time. [Laughter.] (Franken, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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I want to throw out a question about the role of community and technical colleges in college affordability. It seems to me that I've noticed that in this country, we have something of a skills gap. That's a term of art for, basically, jobs that could be filled like that if there was someone with the right skills. And the estimates are about 3.5 million jobs. I've seen partnerships between businesses and community and technical colleges to train people-sometimes it's a credential-" and train people up for these jobs and fulfill a number of needs. And then I've seen these businesses take someone who has just got a credential course- not just, but has gotten a credential course -"to start to work for them, and they're really good, so they send them back to get their associate's degree. And then they're really good, and they come back to work, and they send them back to the University of Minnesota to get their bachelor's degree while they're working. And at the end of the whole thing, they've got a couple of degrees, they've got a good paying job, and they have no college debt. That seems to me like it could be an important piece of addressing a number of things. No. 1, it gets people jobs. And No. 2, it gets American businesses, especially manufacturing, IT, healthcare- "it fills the skills gap. It gets them skilled employees that they need in order to compete and compete globally. So, it feels like it's kind of a win-win-win situation, and I just want to hear any thoughts about where the role of community and technical colleges- what role that plays in college affordability. There seems to be a bias among some parents in this country that a 2-year education is a ceiling, whereas in other nations, it's more seen as a platform that you're going to be getting continuous education during your 40 or 50 years in the workforce anyway. Technology is accelerating so fast that the idea that you won't be having to go back to school or that you'll be doing the same sort of task for the next 50 years of your career is kind of a silly notion. Do you have thoughts on the role of community and technical colleges toward college affordability? (Franken, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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My question, though, is off of Senator Burr's question. He asked a great simple question, which is what can K through 12 do better. My question, at its essence, is pretty simple. What can colleges do better to help at-risk kids once they walk in the door? What we know is that there is a really wide divergence of retention rates from college to college. Some schools get it, and they identify kids who need a little bit of help early on, wrap their arms around them, and help them. And other schools, frankly, are not doing the work necessary to help those kids. And there's all sorts of new innovative technological tools that can help schools identify kids who in that first 6 months just aren't measuring up. So, I guess my question to you all is twofold. What, in your experience, can colleges and institutions of higher education do better to help your students once they come in the door? And, second, are we doing enough within GEAR UP and Upward Bound and TRIO to help students who are applying to schools identify those schools that are actually going to provide the support services and identify the schools that have pretty low retention rates and might not be the best place for kids to end up? (Murphy, Senate, 1/16/2014)

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I know my time is up, but if I could just ask one other question, I just wanted to broadly ask because as Chair of the Budget Committee, I know we live in pretty tight fiscal environments, and a lot of States are moving toward performance metrics for institutions of higher education. What have you learned about performance metrics at the State level just generally? Anybody can respond to that. (Murray, Senate, 7/24/2014)

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I have one other question. I'd be interested in a response from any of the panelists. In dealing with student loans, we have a provision that really limits the ability of an institution to counsel students who are borrowing money. That seems nonsensical. And there have been several suggestions that the institutions themselves, both for-profit and non-profit, become more involved in the loan process. There have also been suggestions of risk sharing; in other words, that at least for some part of a loan, the institution itself would be responsible for some or all of the default. Any of you have any comment on that or any practical way of how to go about doing it? (Alexander, Senate, 7/24/2014)

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Explain an issue or problem

How does the Common Core affect teachers in retention, job satisfaction, and so forth? And I guess we are doing it in Tennessee so I will drop that one in your lap. (Roe to Singer-Gabella, House, 2/27/2014)

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Mr. SCOTT. So, my question is, we are competing for talent. You have got to pay for the talent that you are competing for. What are people with the skill set that we are looking for--what are they making compared to teaching?

Ms. SINGER-GABELLA. First of all, I would agree that there are other factors besides salary, but my colleagues in Tennessee at the State Board of Education did an analysis to look at both starting salaries, which were not altogether necessarily too different, but then if you look 5 and 10 years out, looking at the differential in growth, so that someone, for example, who has a background in mathematics and a bachelor's degree 10 years out--and I would have to go and get you the precise figures, but the salaries were pushing toward \$100,000, whereas for 10 years out for a teacher in our state the salary would be closer to \$45,000.

Mr. SCOTT. And what does this do to your ability to recruit the best and the brightest in mathematics? (Scott to Singer-Gabella, House, 2/27/2014)

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Now, last, I want to get this--and I'm going to talk to Dr. Goldrick-Rab about this, but you can also chime in, any of you. We've seen a big move away from need-based aid to merit-based aid. Now, that sounds very nice. We're all for merit. But what it means is a lot of those people that have the merit also come from that upper quartile of income. So now the aid has shifted to that rather than students who are smart, who can go to college, but who come from poor families, but who have the need. So, I wonder if you could comment on what you see about that, Dr. Goldrick-Rab. We've heard repeatedly how important need-based aid is for low-income students, that merit-based aid does not promote college attendance. What are the obstacles we face in restoring need-based aid as a priority? (Harkin, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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So, I wonder if you can comment on those nontraditional students caught in between and how we can better serve them. I'll start with Dr. Goldrick-Rab, but anyone else who has comments, I would appreciate. (Baldwin, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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I have just a couple of specific questions. I'll start with Dr. Goldrick-Rab, but anyone who has further insights, I would certainly appreciate hearing from you. I've been visiting a lot of technical colleges recently, and at some of them, they've seen a real change in the demographic of their student population with our recent deep recession. Many have been displaced in the recession from their manufacturing jobs. Others are looking for an opportunity to perhaps move ahead in a setting in which they're currently working. They're finding that our financial aid system, in many cases, is just unavailable to them if they are seeking a couple of semesters, a certificate rather than a full degree, and finding it so challenging to move out of, say, "minimum wage employment" to something that would be readily available in their immediate communities

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that could pay \$15, \$20, \$25 an hour because of that gap. So, I wonder if you can comment on those nontraditional students caught in between and how we can better serve them. I'll start with Dr. Goldrick-Rab, but anyone else who has comments, I would appreciate. (Baldwin, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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Confirm or elaborate on testimony

I looked at the chart that you put at the bottom of page four. If we stuck to the present system, in the 10-year window between 2010 and 2020 the loan program is scored as raising \$96 billion, reducing the deficit by \$96 billion. If we switch to your method, it would be scored as adding \$140 billion to the deficit. So, this is a very big deal. It is a quarter of a trillion dollar difference over a 10-year period, which has profound policy implications for how much we charge students and families and what impact it has on taxpayers. So, I wanted to get into and understand the theoretical underpinnings. (Andrews, House, 3/13/2013)

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Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. There are a number of proposals on the table. Do any of them allow you like a mortgage to midstream lock-in a set flat rate, a fixed rate, like you can a mortgage rather than a variable rate that fluctuates with the market? And would that be a good idea? Ms. LUCAS. I believe that the proposals for introducing market-based rates would preserve the fixed rate. Many of those proposals would preserve the fixed rate nature of the loans so if the student had 20 years to pay it would be at a fixed rate that was determined in the year they took out the loan. The change would be that loans that were originated in different years would bear different interest rates that moved along with market interest rates. Mr. SCOTT. But there would not be a variable interest rate on the individual loan? It wouldn't go up and down with the market? Ms. LUCAS. No, just like you said, as with a mortgage, students would get a fixed rate and they would have the option to prepay it. So, if they had the opportunity to refund at a lower rate— Mr. SCOTT. How do mortgages reset their interest rate every couple of years? Mr. Delisle, if you don't have a discharge at the end of income based repayment, wouldn't some people be paying virtually for the rest of their lives? Mr. DELISLE. Oh, sure, and we haven't recommended that you do away with loan forgiveness. We said it's the combination of unlimited borrowing authority for graduate students plus three limits on repayment. One of them is loan forgiveness at 20 years or 10 years. Another is between zero and 10 percent of their adjusted gross income, and the other limit is

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another limit for high income earners that the payment stops going up. If you have unlimited borrowing up front, three separate limits on the back, that is essentially a great big moral hazard and a message to students to borrow away. (Scott, House, 3/13/2013)

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Both Dr. Hurd and Dr. Heller, you talked about the concept of fit, which is I would imagine a particularly elusive concept and one that is intensely personal and it seems to me that the point that you are making particularly you, Dr. Hurd, with respect to fit, goes to the human element of the college selection process which in turn goes to the element of the college completion process. I mean, one of the truisms of student retention issues if you want students to finish right, you have got to get them started right and one of the ways to get them started right is to make sure they pick the right school. So, what I want to pursue with both of you is the suggestion you are making, Dr. Heller, about some federal role in helping particularly low income schools afford a better college counseling program. So, could you talk about it from the perspective of what is in your head, and then Dr. Hurd, what your actual experience is? (Bishop, House, 4/24/2013)

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Dr. Heller... We have talked about some generalities, but if you could give us some specifics on how many avenues the average Michigan student and parent have to access information about a college or university and also its associated costs. (Walberg, House, 4/24/2013)

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Mr. BISHOP. But what you are talking about is some kind of either formula-driven or competitive grant program that would place college counselors in high need school districts?  
Mr. HELLER. Correct and I think most effectively if it is partnered with the states and local districts.

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Mr. BISHOP. All right. (Bishop to Heller, House, 4/24/2013)

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Dr. Isbell, let me just start with you. I just want to be clear on something. We hear a lot about how the regional accrediting process is often an inhibiting force in terms of program development and program innovation. And if I understood you correctly, the program that you have described is the first master's degree program in the country that will be offered exclusively on a MOOC platform. Is that correct? Mr. ISBELL. That is correct. Mr. BISHOP. And you were able to in effect, gain the concurrence of your accreditor by virtue of an hour-long conversation and then I would assume some other conversations. Is that right? Mr. ISBELL. That is correct. Mr. BISHOP. So, it is fair to assume that the accreditor was cooperative and helpful as opposed to inhibiting? Mr. ISBELL. Absolutely. Mr. BISHOP. Okay. Thank you. And congratulations to you. Really. It is very impressive. (Bishop, House, 9/13/2013)

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Dr. Baum, you propose determining Pell eligibility just once when students are juniors in high school and allowing that eligibility to last through age 24. Could you elaborate on how this simplification would encourage more low-income students to apply to college while reducing the burden on institutions of higher education? (Hinojosa to Baum, House, 11/13/2013)

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So, if we go to simplification as one of our goals here, not just for loans but for others, will that help to stabilize the Pell Grant--keep this kind of thing from going on? And how would that work? (Kline to Baum, House, 11/13/2013)

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My question--I am going to start out with Dr. Singer-Gabella--is with respect to the partnerships between higher ed institutions and school districts and how important those are to ensure that we have the most effective teaching programs possible. Can you expand a bit on what your partnerships are at

Vanderbilt and other higher ed institutions and really what is the role that the school district should be playing in ensuring that those partnerships are so strong? (Brooks, House, 2/27/2014)

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Dr. Singer-Gabella, you mentioned three factors that make it difficult to retain intelligent and committed individuals into the teaching profession: the absence of a real career path that allows growth while still teaching, low levels of respect and compensation, and an imbalance of interests in test scores

that saps motivation. So how can these be overcome? And I know we could talk about that for a few hours, but if you could

briefly address that because I do have another question as well. (Bonamici, House, 2/27/2014)

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Dr. Heller, you mentioned this early Federal Pell grant commitment demonstration program, and the concept behind it is a message, "You will be able to afford college, and therefore utilize your high school experience productively because there is a future for you." Now you talked about the

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need to fund this. Has it been funded at all, and do we have any results as a model, or is this a vision that has yet to be experimented with? (Merkley, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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Dean Heller said that it is unquestioned that the change in State funding is the principle reason for the rise in tuition. And Dr. Leath remembered that in 1981, I believe it was you, 75 percent in Iowa, the State paid the cost of a student going to Iowa State and the students paid the other part. That was true in Tennessee in 1981. I was Governor then. It was 70/30. And we had a deal with the students, "If we increase tuition by 2 percent, we will increase the State funding by 2 percent," that is what we did. And today, it is just the reverse in our State, as it is just reversed in your State based on what you said. But I did not hear any of you say what you think is the principle reason why States have failed to fund higher education as well today as they did 30 years ago. Anyone want to say what that is? (Alexander, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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Dr. Long, you were saying that with some help, the number of students who need financial aid the most going to college might increase by about 30 percent. Is that what you said?

Ms. LONG. We were dealing with very low-income students in Ohio and giving them—

Senator ALEXANDER. But is it 30 percent?

Ms. LONG. Yes, for the high school graduates that we served—

Senator ALEXANDER. And these are people who would be eligible for the Pell grant. Well, we have 9 million Pell grants, so that's 2 million or 3 million students. Is that right?

Ms. LONG. If we were to put it over the entire population, I don't know that the effect would be 30 percent for everyone. But for these very low-income students who were prepared for college, that was — (Alexander, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Senator ALEXANDER. But if the community college costs less, you can still get the money for room and board, and you end up getting about the same.

Ms. LONG. Yes, Senator, you are correct. Wherever you attend, you get the same amount of Pell grant money. (Alexander, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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In your testimony, I'm looking at Lesson 3 entitled "Students Need More Than Just Information, They Need Individualized Help." And you say in that part of your testimony, in a pertinent part, that, and I'm quoting, "They need assistance walking through the application process." And then you go on to say, "Many high schools and colleges, particularly public institutions, are insufficiently staffed to provide such support with student to counselor ratios at public colleges as high as 1,500 to one." We, unfortunately, had an example of that in Philadelphia, where at Central High School, because of cutbacks, they're down to about 2,400 students having access to

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just two guidance counselors. I just want to have you speak to that fundamental part of the process. (Casey to Scott-Clayton, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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I was struck by, on the next page, where you say, “because these interventions are largely based on phone calls and/or text messages than relying upon in-person meetings.” In other words, I guess some of the studies show very low cost per student positive impact, even with something as simple as a text message. Is that correct? (Casey to Scott-Clayton, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Respond to testimony of another witness

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Mr. Delisle, you were very clear in what you thought about caps in light of the various repayment options, income-based repayment options and so forth. You were pretty clear. I would like to hear from the other three of you, or just sort of quickly, the pros and cons of putting an interest rate cap. Dr. Lucas? (Kline, House, 3/13/2013)

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I am curious, however, whether or not you all agree in the benefits of a work study program or are you opposed to work study? I am unclear. I heard some of you say that you believe that there are benefits to it, but I am curious, rather than, you know, increasing grants and loans and so forth, is there not a benefit to work study? And I am curious why it was eliminated from your study, Ms. Conklin, just out of curiosity. (Brooks, House, 11/13/2013)

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The CHAIRMAN. Any observations, thoughts, on what Mr. Batson just said, anybody? (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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Any other ideas about that? (Alexander, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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Senator HAGAN. Do any of the other witnesses have comments on that? (Hagan, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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Is what Ms. Sertich said true? I mean, do you all do that in your States, in Vermont and--this is kind of news to me. (Harkin, Senate, 1/16/2014)

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Propose policy solutions and recommendations

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Dr. Heller, if you had to pick five pieces of information that the federal government should collect and ensure it is provided to students, what would they be and why? (Fox, House, 4/24/2013)

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What regulations and programs, or whatever you want to call them, would you take away or consolidate? (Murray follow-up to Goldrick-Rab, 4/16/2013)

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I want to just pick up on Chairman Kline's question. I will address it to Dr. Heller and Mr. Reindl. Are we currently collecting any information that is not particularly useful to either policymakers or students that we could do away with? Just real quick. Anything come to mind? (Bishop, House, 4/24/2013)

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What policy changes would you recommend in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to make public/private partnerships easier and more effective? (Foxy to Barniuk, House, 9/18/2013)

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all of you. You know, one of the things that you have mentioned, I think, throughout the discussion is that students need more information. We know that there should be more sophisticated databases and Web sites that students can go to, and I know there has been – and I think we have had some discussion of that here in the committee, as well – something that is a little more foolproof, I think, and really cites the right metrics or, you know, that are important for students, that are agreed upon, kind of a universal consensus among schools. But I also get the feeling that, you know, there ought to be some other way of doing that. And, do you have any ideas about that? And let me just share very quickly. I had a number of folks come to me the other day on veterans issues and veterans support within schools, universities, colleges, community colleges, et cetera. And, there is a feeling that more education is needed to really understand how – whether it is the additional dollars that they are receiving as a result of being veterans or other means, that they don't have that information. And so, it is very hard to really make good comparisons. Is that as big an issue as – I think you have mentioned, but maybe that is not the focus of this discussion. How would you do that? Because one of their interests was in having a mandated course – maybe not even a – well, could be a full semester – if a university takes dollars then they ought to be providing that in a way that students can get that information where they have counselors on hand there, it is more than a Web site, to be able to make those decent decisions. What do you think? I mean, is that something that – because certainly tuition is the bigger issue here but we are not going to answer that question. I know universities are working on that when it comes to the total package that students are having to deal with. (Davis, House, 11/13/2013)

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So, we are in a situation now where increasingly, many of the jobs in our economy are going to require some higher education. I think in about 5 years I have seen statistics suggesting that more than 65 percent of the jobs will actually require a college degree. And so given this changing sort of landscape that we find ourselves in, maybe we will start with Dr. Perna, I mean, what do you suggest that we do from a federal government perspective in investing in the notion that we are going to have to better prepare a wider number of Americans for successfully completing a higher education in order for us as a country, I think, to remain prepared for our folks to adequately succeed in the 21st century economy? (Jeffries, House, 4/30/2015)

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My question, at its essence, is pretty simple. What can colleges do better to help at-risk kids once they walk in the door? What we know is that there is a really wide divergence of retention rates from college to college. Some schools get it, and they identify kids who need a little bit of help early on, wrap their arms around them, and help them. And other schools, frankly, are not doing the work necessary to help those kids. And there's all sorts of new innovative technological tools that can help schools identify kids who in that first 6 months just aren't measuring up. So, I guess my question to you all is twofold. What, in your experience, can colleges and institutions of higher education do better to help your students once they come in the door? And, second, are we doing enough within GEAR UP and Upward Bound and TRIO to help students who are applying to schools identify those schools that are actually going to provide the support services and identify the schools that have pretty low retention rates and might not be the best place for kids to end up? (Murphy, Senate, 1/16/2013)

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Now I would like to ask each witness if you would answer this question: as the committee begins to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, what are some key principles that should guide how we review and reform federal student aid programs? Please keep in mind we probably have about 3 minutes and there are four of you. So, if you could do about 40 seconds, maybe we could get to everyone and we will start with Dr. Lucas and go down. (Foxy to Lucas, House, 3/13/2013)

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And so, as we are taking a--as we are looking at Title II reauthorization for Higher Education Act, would you give some recommendations that we should be thinking of that would encourage you to do this and not hinder you from doing this? What changes would you like to see, or additions? (Guthrie to Singer-Gabella, House, 2/27/2014)

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I have to admit to you, I was disheartened to hear these statistics that we had gone and 25 years ago the average teacher had a 15-year career to today, 1-year. My sister-in-law is actually a teacher who is 20 years into her career and seems to be going strong, so she will be moving that number up. I think it is sort of self-evident that if someone has been there a year, it creates some real challenges. My instincts are that federal policy may not be the answer here, but I would just ask to start with you [Dr. Singer-Gabella] and--Ms. Hall, and then any others: What can we do as a society to try to change the attrition rate? (Messer, House, 2/27/2014)

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I introduced a bill a couple of weeks ago, Honoring all Veterans Act, which provides for more transitional services. And the Consumer Financial Protection Board actually has a unit, headed by Holly Petreaus, related to General Petraeus by marriage, and they are beginning this kind of work. So, I think the more ideas we can get from you to improve protection of veterans, particularly because they are an especially vulnerable population. So, any ideas you have now or going forward - Ms. Abernathy also mentioned that issue, alluded to it in her last answer to me. I would welcome them now or in the future. (Blumethal, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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Ms. GOLDRICK-RAB. I'd like to add to this discussion, however, that research is very clear, and there's some new research out of the Community College Research Center that indicates that while the blended version, which you are receiving at the moment, where you have some online and some in-person, does well by students. The achievement gap grows when we push students to only have online courses. In addition, I want to note that when students work full-time--again, I think these are exceptional folks who are managing to work long, long hours and do well in school. What typically happens is that the lowest income students work those long hours, but these are the same folks who have the least academic preparation, and this time working competes with their time for studying and academic advising. This is why we find so many of them end up with debt and no degree, and those are the folks----

Senator MURRAY. So how do we address that? What is the best way to address that?

Ms. GOLDRICK-RAB. I think, first of all, the best way to address that is to reduce the cost of going to college so that it doesn't require one to work such long hours and to borrow. If one works 40 hours a week during college and has grant aid, there's a question about why there should still be cost left over for loans. So, in the meantime----

Senator MURRAY. So, what is the best way to address the affordability issue? Because what we're doing here is trying to create all kinds of ways to pay more or put more money into the system so that students can succeed. Let's ask the question: How do we decrease the cost of college itself? (Murray to Goldrick-Rab, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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I wonder if you can comment on those nontraditional students caught in between and how we can better serve them. I'll start with Dr. Goldrick-Rab, but anyone else who has comments, I would appreciate. (Baldwin, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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I want to start out my first question, Dr. Baum or Mr. Delisle: One of the questions I often have is how we as policymakers can empower students to be good consumers in postsecondary education, in higher education, you know, whether it is a certificate program, whether it is associate degree, whether it is a four-year, whether it is graduate studies. So, beyond the tools currently available by the Department of Education, what recommendations could you make? (Thompson, House, 11/13/2013)

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One of the questions I often have is how we as policymakers can empower students to be good consumers in postsecondary education, in higher education, you know, whether it is a certificate program, whether it is associate degree, whether it is a four-year, whether it is graduate studies. So, beyond the tools currently available by the Department of Education, what recommendations could you make? (Thompson to Baum, House, 11/13/2013)

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So how do we address this? How do we couple a performance in the marketplace--this is a marketplace for for-profit schools--couple that with whether or not their students are succeeding? Am I making any sense on that? (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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Dr. Heller, we will start with you. Your testimony explains that a better way to encourage access and completion is to focus on need-based aid. Two days ago, "The New York Times" reported that the percentage of students receiving merit aid grew so rapidly from 1995 to 2008 that by 2008, it was equal to the percentage of students receiving need-based aid. They also said that even public universities, despite State budget cuts, continued to offer merit aid to try to attract high achieving students without considering their financial need. Can you describe what we can do to encourage schools to use their limited resources on more need-based aid, and why it is important to do so? You have mentioned in your testimony that 30 percent of grants by State, 55 percent of grants by institutions have no means testing. Why is it important, and what can we do to encourage them to focus more on need-based? (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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I have heard it from just about everybody here in this panel about getting involved in more online activities. The young people today are learning that way. They are learning more that way. As adolescents, they are more and more adapting to learning online. What can we do, on the Federal level, to help promote this? Whether it is Iowa State, or it is our community colleges which, I think, really ought to be involved in this because you know what needs to be done; when you have 98 percent of your students getting jobs, that is fantastic. I can tell you it is not that way in the for-profit industry. Somehow there is great expertise here. Why are more schools not getting involved in online activities and extending out more: private colleges, public universities, regent schools, community colleges? Dr. Twigg, why? (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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Dr. Scott-Clayton talked about the importance of acknowledging the fact, for instance, that people that are going to college actually would like to go year-round, and maybe our Federal aid program should recognize that. What other things should we think about if we got to a place where we had that simplification - one grant, one loan, one tax credit? What other kinds of things would we want to reflect? We've heard about credit hours today, I think, lifting the cap. We've heard about summer, year-round school. What other kinds of flexibility would you like to see? (Bennet, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Does anybody else want to comment on that? Dr. Scott-Clayton.

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Yes. I also have a proposal with my colleague, Sandy Baum, to do this as well. And it would enable students to take up to 45 credits per year, year-round. Just set the Pell amount on a per credit basis and let students decide. As far as the summer Pell being more expensive than anticipated, we're going to be following that up to see what the effect of that was. Maybe it saved some money a few years down the line because those students were actually able to finish their programs faster.

Senator MURRAY. So, you'll be getting that information back to us? (Murray, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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I'd love to hear--and if you want to submit ideas in follow-up--ways in which we might improve GEAR UP successes and opportunities to grow the program's impact. Does anyone want to jump in now? (Baldwin, Senate, 1/16/2014)

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Senator WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask another question about the GEAR UP and TRIO programs. As I understand it, these are really the only significant programs that really aim toward completion and access issues. And if these programs were running perfectly, and you were all the way out at the edges of what you were able to accomplish--you get about 800,000 kids through in a year--I have a scale question. By the year 2020, we know that about 65 percent of all jobs are going to require some kind of post-secondary education. If we stay on our current trend line, we're going to be about 5 million young people short of meeting that goal. We also know our current college completion rates. We've got about 55 percent completing within 6 years. So, this tells me we've got to get more people into school, post-secondary. We've got to get more of them out, that is, all the way through. And I'll just make the note off to the side that it has a powerful impact on things like whether or not they can pay their student loans. So, all these pieces intersect. The question I have is a scale question. The direction that we're headed says we're going to fall short in getting the kind of results that you are working toward. So what ideas do you have for how we can scale up? And we have to think about this in a cost-effective way. Are there specific things that you can identify where it's something we can scale up cheaply? Are there other approaches we should be using? That's really where I'd like to start this. (Warren, Senate, 1/16/2014)

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Here's my question to all of you. I took up half my time. I am too tired to deal with unwilling dance partners on this subject. What I want to know is what we can do with the Federal law to incentivize programs like the one that we're rolling out in Denver—and I gather you've got a residency program at ASU—while others are figuring out that this is going to be the future. What can we do in terms of how we think about our budgets, both K-12 and higher ed acts, and what can we think about with respect to our regulations, simply to give permission to those out in the world who are prepared today to innovate and scale? (Bennet, Senate, 3/24/2014)

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Dr. Perna, I'll start with you. You talked in your testimony about the five States that you had done a comprehensive examination of. Through this examination, did you identify any best practices among States for boosting college completion rates among their students, particularly low-income students? I would add here that the president of Arizona State University, Michael Crow, I think here once made a statement that really caught me. He said that if you are a C student from a high-income family, you have an 80 percent chance of completing college. If you are an A student from a low-income family, your chances are only 17 percent. So, what are some of the best practices that we can do to close that gap? You mentioned the gaps. (Harkin to Perna, Senate, 7/24/2014)

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Senator ALEXANDER. No. I want to say thank you for your comments. After you leave, if you have any specific thoughts about simplification, things that we could actually write into a Higher Education Act, I would welcome those. If you have any specific recommendations about risk sharing for institutions on loans, we're very actively considering that. Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island is interested in that. I'm interested in it. Others are, too. But we want to make sure we do it in a correct way. I would welcome having those ideas. Thank you. (Closing remarks, Alexander, Senate, 7/24/2014)

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Identify pros and cons  
of a proposal

Mr. Delisle, you were very clear in what you thought about caps in light of the various repayment options, income-based repayment options and so forth. You were pretty clear. I would like to hear from the other three of you, or just sort of quickly, the pros and cons of putting an interest rate Cap. Dr. Lucas? (Kline, House, 3/13/2013)

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There are a number of proposals on the table. Do any of them allow you like a mortgage to midstream lock-in a set flat rate, a fixed rate, like you can a mortgage rather than a variable rate that fluctuates with the market? And would that be a good idea? (Scott to Lucas, House, 3/13/2013)

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And I understand this is a conceptual proposal, but we don't legislate concepts; we legislate statutes and they have real impact on real people. And the one thing I am alarmed with reading this is this--look, I think people should finish as quickly as they can, but my concern here is for people for whom full-time going to school is not a viable option. Does this proposal penalize them? Yes or no? (Andrews to Baum, House, 11/13/2013)

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I noticed in your prepared testimony that everyone except, I think, Dr. Baum, who was more talking about grant programs, endorsed making some form of income-based repayment the automatic or sole repayment option for federal student loans. And I would really like to ask each of you--and, Dr. Baum, if you would care to comment on it as well--if you could elaborate on your thinking regarding the potential benefits of making income-based automatic, in terms of simplification and other goals that we are pursuing in the reauthorization. Who would like to start? (Petri, House, 11/13/2013)

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Well, that is a different question. But, can anybody tell me definitively whether she is better off under the new proposal or the old one? (Andrews, House, 11/13/2013)

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And I want to ask Ms. Conklin—you or anyone else on the panel—the following question: Let's take a woman who makes \$30,000 a year, works full time, and she has two children. And she has an associate's degree now, and her goal is to earn a bachelor's degree in accounting because she thinks she could make another \$10,000 or \$15,000 a year if she did that. Under the one grant, one loan idea, how much would she get if your idea were adopted and how much does she get now? Let's say she is taking two courses per semester, because, you know, when you look at her, full-time work and full-time mom that is about—she sleeps very little but she takes two courses a semester. How does the proposal affect her? (Andrews, House, 11/13/2013)

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It seems that the further along we get in rolling out teacher evaluation systems the more questions we have regarding value-added formulas, the impact of individual teachers on student learning, and the overuse of test scores. Yet the conventional wisdom seems to be that we need to hold teacher preparation programs accountable by looking at the test scores of the K-12 students of program graduates. Given some of the problems with using children's test scores to evaluate K-12 teachers, do you have any concerns with extrapolating such data to teacher preparation programs? (Wilson, House, 2/27/2014)

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Now, I'd like to begin what I hope will be a spirited, fruitful discussion. I am assured that we will be joined by some Senators later. I just left a caucus in which the White House was present and in which obviously there was a lot of debate and discussion going on the debt ceiling right now. So, they will probably be tied up in that for a few more minutes, but they will be here shortly. I want this to be a roundtable discussion. Some of you had statements prepared. They will be submitted in their entirety to the record. It's not a formal type of hearing. I'd like to kick it off with some questions, and then we'll go around and discuss things and get perspectives. (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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I'm looking forward to hearing what the pros and cons are of the various ideas that the witnesses have suggested to us. They may have some reasonable proposals here that we ought to adopt. (Alexander, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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I know the administration is trying to get some feedback now on their college rating system where colleges would be judged on the value that they provide. I have heard some concerns from my State that a rating system could harm institutions that serve a large percentage of disadvantaged students, like our community colleges. Can anybody comment on how that rating system might affect those institutions? (Murray to Long, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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This [risk-sharing] is an important subject. It's one on which the committee is looking for answers, and for my way of thinking, it's one we're likely to very seriously consider incorporating. I also think it's one where we need to be careful because when we're talking about such large amounts of money and so many individuals, there are almost certain to be unintended consequences from whatever we do, so I'd like to do it carefully. Dr. Webber, for example, you talked about one unintended consequence which you found in your research paper might be that we might raise tuition. Another might be that we might find schools dropping out of the loan program. For example, Tennessee has 13 community colleges. Four do not participate, two are dropping out now... Are we likely to see -- would one effect of a risk-sharing program be to cause many of the 2,000 community colleges, for example, to drop out?" (Alexander to Webber, Senate, 5/20/15)

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Appendix B.4. Discursive strategies addressing: How do legislators frame the information they receive from academic witnesses? (sub-question 4)

Argumentation strategies	Examples
Invite witnesses to offer any perspective	<p>Thank you. Does anyone else have anything to add? (Desjarlais, House, 11/13/2013)</p> <p>Before we close I'd like to go down the panel for any last thoughts. As I said at the beginning, I wanted to have a general discussion. I think we had a pretty good discussion on outcomes, disclosure standards, incentives and I just wondered if anybody had any last thoughts, maybe something we haven't even brought up or discussed yet that you might want to say before we leave here. (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)</p> <p>Are there any other things that anybody wants to put on the record here or say that I have not asked, or anyone has not asked a question, or delved into that you wish to add anything to the testimony? (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012)</p> <p>I invite any of you, if you have thoughts on this later on, to get it to this committee and let us know your suggestions, your thoughts on this, on how we can effect some of these changes a little bit more. (Harkin, Senate, 7/19/2012)</p> <p>And there's a consensus about that, isn't there, among most of you? That's two things. So, one is, with some help, a lot more students would go. And two is if we reverse that process now, a third consensus I think I saw was that about all you need to know in a Pell grant is family income and family size. Is that correct? Do all four of you agree with that? (Alexander, Senate, 11/14/2013)</p> <p>Any other thoughts? Ms. Donelson (Harkin, Senate, 4/16/2013)</p> <p>Does anybody else have any ideas about how we address that? (Murray, Senate, 4/16/2013)</p> <p>Right. Does anybody else want to comment on that? Dr. Scott-Clayton. (Murray, Senate, 11/14/2013)</p> <p>Anybody else? Dr. Brabeck. (Harkin, Senate, 3/25/2014)</p>
Frame within claim of truth or rightness	<p>Mr. Scott. Dr. Perna, you mentioned the financial aid form. Are people actually not filling it out because of the complications?</p> <p>Ms. PERNA. Yes. There is some evidence that suggests that low-income students who are eligible to receive a Pell Grant attend college but they haven't applied for the aid.</p> <p>Mr. SCOTT. Is that because of the complication of the form? (Scott to Perna, House, 4/30/2015)</p>



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Does anyone know how much the taxpayers eat because of for-profits? Does anyone have some kind of estimate? How much is it costing--I mean we are trying to balance the budget here, we are trying to reduce our deficit. (Franken, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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I am also concerned because last month in the unemployment numbers, about 12.5 percent of our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were unemployed. I think education is key in matching skill sets with employers. But with the generous post-9/11 benefit package, a veteran can easily exhaust their benefits pursuing a degree at a for-profit institution. And to the dismay of the veteran, in many cases their accumulated credits are not recognized, if they attempt to transfer, in some cases, to a public institution. Do you believe the GI bill should be counted as Federal financial aid for the purposes of enforcing the 90/10 rule? And do you believe that the gainful employment regulation provides sufficient incentive for the for-profit schools to keep the tuition growth to more reasonable levels than what we have seen in recent years? I welcome any of you to comment on these two questions. (Hagan, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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The Chairman. So, I guess what I would ask is what does this tell us about the effectiveness of a 2- or even 3-year cohort window at judging the real default rates? What does this mean for the 2 million students currently enrolled in for-profit institutions? In other words, there are too many of these students enrolled, if the lifetime default rate is 55 to 70 percent or somewhere in that neighborhood, what does that mean for them and what does it mean for the taxpayers, to get to Mr. Merkley's question? Is the current practice of looking at only a 2- to 3-year window of default for Federal loans adequate to protect taxpayers? If you have default rates that high, it costs money to go after those to pay it. So, some collection agency is making money, maybe you don't get 100 cents on the dollar, maybe you get 50 cents or 40 cents, but the collection agency gets a large share of that. And so that is a loss to the taxpayer. It is hard to estimate, but I just ask you, if you are looking at these 10-year default rates, what does that mean 10 years from now for that cohort that is in these schools right now and how much of a loss will that be on the taxpayers and shouldn't we be looking at longer window default rates than just 2 or 3 years? (Harkin, Senate, 6/7/2011)

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The CHAIRMAN. Well, two last things. We're getting late. To me this is vitally important, this discussion we're having, because we're trying to get to a point where we can see what do we need to do, and I'll follow up with that in a minute. But right now, one thing that's kind of bedeviled us in looking at this is that, as we point out, broadly speaking across the sector, 86 percent of the revenues come from taxpayer dollars; some more, some less, but that's the average. Most of that is not spent on education. What's the rationale for allowing schools to use unchecked amounts of taxpayer dollars, over \$250 million each year at some schools, to market and in some instances market deceptively? We've talked about that. Should for-profit companies be able to use non-Federal revenue sources for this purpose? Should there be, again, a disaggregation there? How much should be used for marketing and for profit, and how much should be used for educational support? Getting back to educational support services. Any thoughts on that? (Harkin, Senate, 7/21/2011)

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The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all very much for very concise summaries of your written statements. We'll start a series of 5-minute questions. I want to ask kind of a specific element here. More and more children with disabilities are now being taught in inclusive classrooms. That's good. We know that this benefits both disabled and nondisabled students in their growth. But my question is: Are general education teachers getting enough training to confidently teach a mixed abilities group? And should all teachers receive some training in disability education? I'll just go on a little bit more. We know that children with disabilities and children of color are at a disproportionate risk of being suspended, physically restrained, involuntarily confined, or arrested in school. These practices traumatize students. They limit their access to classroom instruction and make it more difficult for them to succeed. Again, in teacher training and in teacher education, what's being done to address this? This is a very serious problem in our schools today. And yet, as I read all your testimonies yesterday in preparation for today, I don't see anything in there on that. There's a lot of general stuff in there. I got that. But teacher accreditation—are we asking any of these questions? I don't see it. Do you? Dr. Koerner. (Harkin, Senate, 3/25/2014)

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Dr. Gasman and Dr. Bassett, both of you have talked about the teacher education programs at our minority serving institutions and the impact that they make on other students, minority students, around the country. Dr. Gasman, I think in your testimony, you said that 11 percent of teacher education degrees were awarded at minority serving institutions. Could both of you talk just a minute or so about the impact that that means to our minority students and how we've got to be sure these education programs are of the highest caliber and quality? (Hagan, Senate, 5/13/2014)

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Senator WARREN. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing. Thank you, Ranking Member Paul. And thank you all for being here today. I'd like to go back to this question about college loans. The rising cost of tuition is causing more and more students to have to take on more and more debt, and students of color are being hit the hardest. According to the Urban Institute, African Americans and Latinos are about twice as likely as other students to have loan debt. Now, let's be really clear about this loan debt. This is not federally subsidized loan debt. In fact, what the numbers show is that the Federal Government is making a profit from the student loan program. I think you cited the GAO statistics that show that just one narrow slice, the loans from 2007 to 2012, are on track to produce \$66 billion in profits for the U.S. Government. In other words, young people whose parents can afford to write a check for college pay one price, and young people whose parents can't afford to pay up front for college and have to borrow that money pay a much higher tax in order to go to college. They pay more. So, we're starting to feel the effects of this throughout the economy. The Federal Reserve, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Treasury Department have all weighed in, talking about the fact that young people are not saving up to buy homes. They're not buying homes. They're not buying cars. They're not making the move, starting small businesses that we would otherwise expect. But what I'd like you to do, if you could, for just a minute is—you work hard at your institutions—Dr. Lomax, at your organization—to give students opportunities so that they can realize from higher education an opportunity to build something in their own lives, in their communities, and in this country. What's the impact on these young students of having rising college student loan costs? Maybe, Dr. Gasman, you could start. (Warren, Senate, 5/13/2014)

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I wanted to ask Dr. Perna just one last question on this. On Federal-State partnerships here, I know that my friend, Senator Alexander, has talked about the Medicaid problems. I don't think we need to debate that here. We've debated that a lot in the past, I think. But what I want to know from you is, tell me again in your own words and the research that you've done, why a State-Federal partnership is needed for college affordability in the context of State disinvestment. I don't want to get into this whole Medicaid thing, but the fact is—and we've had the data to show, that States have been disinvesting. Dr. Kaler talked about what happened in Minnesota. In the past, if a student brought a dollar, the State brought two dollars. Today, if a student brings a dollar, the State brings 50 cents.

Mr. KALER. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The State has been disinvesting. So why is it so important for the Federal

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Government and the State government to partner in college affordability? (Harkin, Senate, 7/24/2014)

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Dr. Webber, when you considered the impact of risk-sharing, did you assume that the current Higher Ed regulations would remain in place?

Dr. WEBBER. I did.

Senator WARREN. Did your research reach any conclusions on whether implementing risk-sharing would make other Federal regulations unnecessary?

Dr. WEBBER. No. That was—the nature of the research was because I was trying to evaluate a hypothetical. I can really only handle one hypothetical at a time.

Senator WARREN. Fair enough, fair enough. Good to move only one variable at a time. OK.

Dr. Kelly has argued that instituting risk-sharing on student loan repayment, the Federal Government might be able to do away with certain key accountability measures, as Ms. Wang discussed, like cohort default rates, the 90/10 rule, and the gainful employment regulation. I just want to think about what we know about the impact of those Higher Ed regulations.

Dr. Webber, you noted in your research that when strict default standards were put in place back in 1991, that cohort default rates dropped 33 percent in a single year. Would you be concerned about rolling back a measure that had such a substantial and positive impact?

Dr. WEBBER. Well, first I would say that also happened to take place during an economic recovery.

Senator WARREN. Fair enough.

Dr. WEBBER. There was some tinkering.

I would certainly be concerned. However, I feel that, as Dr. Kelly had mentioned before, the access to title IV funding is a very blunt measure that only incentivizes a very specific type of institution that is above the 30 percent threshold. It does absolutely nothing for those under it. We could actually even keep the existing regulation and just add incentives for those under the threshold.

Senator WARREN. All right. That's a very helpful point. Thank you, Dr. Webber.

I just want to be clear on this. Simple, structural rules to help this market work better is something that both Democrats and Republicans should support. Before we even consider eliminating any of the rules that have actually helped stem the rising tide of defaults, we should be certain that we are putting in place a stronger system that will help students. There may be a path here, but we want to be very careful that we are not making things worse. (Warren, Senate, 5/20/2015)

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Dr. Webber, one of my top priorities as we work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act is going to be to reduce the crushing burden of student debt. We know that student loan debt has now hit historic highs. More than 40 million Federal and private student loan borrowers collectively owe

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more than \$1.2 trillion. That's rather stunning. I wanted to ask, how do risk-sharing proposals like yours have the potential to reduce loan debt for the students? (Murray, Senate, 5/20/2015)

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We've heard a lot about the need for colleges and universities to have skin in the game when it comes to student loan debt and default rates, with a focus on accountability metrics, and I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight a risk-sharing program that's been in place for many years, the Federal Perkins Loan program. In this campus-based loan program, participating schools share the risk by providing a one-third match to the Federal funding, and loans are made using funds repaid from previous borrowers, which encourages the institution to keep their default rates as low as possible. As a campus-based program, Perkins also allows institutions to target aid to those students most in need. In my home State of Wisconsin, the Perkins program provides more than 15,000 students, those students having exceptional need, with more than \$28 million in aid, and the default rate has been less than 8 percent.

This program has been successfully helping students since 1958 but will expire this September if Congress does not take action to continue it.

I want to start with Ms. Wang and Dr. Webber, if you could speak to the importance of the Perkins Loan program both in helping low-income students and in providing a model of institutions engaging in risk-sharing. Are there ways we could build on this longstanding program? (Baldwin, Senate, 5/20/2015)

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Dr. Scott-Clayton, you know what this is, right? I wanted to do that before Senator Bennet did it.

[Laughter.]

This is the Federal student loan application, 108 questions long, correct?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. That's the FAFSA.

The CHAIRMAN. Would it surprise you if I told you that the president of Southwest Community College in Memphis says that he thinks he loses 1,500 students a semester because of the complexity?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. That would not surprise me.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you familiar with the FAST Act that Senator Bennet and Senators Burr and Isakson and Senator Booker and Senator King have introduced?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Yes, I am.

The CHAIRMAN. It has these provisions. It would reduce this 108 questions to two. It would tell families that they could fill it out in their junior year of high school. It would combine two Federal grant programs into one Pell grant program and reduce the number of loan programs. It would provide for year-round Pell grants, discourage over-borrowing, and simplify repayment options.

Are you familiar with the proposed FAST Act?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Yes, I am.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you think it would address the testimony that you gave that the complexity of the Federal aid system is a significant barrier to a large number of students? I might ask you also before you answer: Would you be surprised to learn that a college president in Tennessee took 9 months to help his daughter pay off her student loan because they kept finding there was no way to fully pay it off, even though there is a very generous procedure for paying off loans?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. That does not surprise me. At community colleges, in particular, people may be surprised that the rate of Pell grant receipt at community colleges is about the same as at private

4-year institutions... (Alexander, Senate, 6/3/2015)

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Prior to my election to the Senate, I worked at a college in Maine, Husson University, and at that time, some 85 percent of the students there were first-generation college students, and virtually all of that group received some sort of Federal financial aid. It was there that I learned that there was often a lot of pressure on the students to drop out of school, get a job, buy that car, because of the cost that they were bearing despite the financial aid that they were receiving. That's the group that I am most concerned about. We know and we heard from Dr. Akers today that individuals who complete their college career are going to have lifetime earnings that are far higher than those with just a high school degree. There are those in the middle who have gone to college for a couple of years, amassed debt, and then dropped out, who are really in the worst situation. That's why I'd like to ask the panel your opinion of programs like the TRIO program, which helps to provide counseling support, not only to students who are thinking of going to college, but throughout their college careers. I've also seen programs at Eastern Maine Community College in Maine called College Success programs that work with this vulnerable group to encourage them to hang in there and helps them deal with whatever issues that they have so that they complete their college degree. If we could go down the list—because if you think about it, that's the group that really is most vulnerable. They amass debt, and yet they don't get the benefit of the higher earnings that come from college completion.

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Your concern is absolutely on target, and one way that the Federal policy reform can help here is—so these guidance and support services that you're talking about are absolutely critical in the current system. What if we could simplify student aid so that it didn't have to be so complicated, so it didn't require this army of support services? (Collins, Senate, 6/3/2015)

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While we can speak in averages about the average experience that people have in this country, the way people in poverty intersect with our system of K–12 and higher education bears no resemblance to the way people that are more affluent intersect with the system. It's very important for people to understand that on this committee and in this Senate. Forty years ago, if you were 22 years old, your Pell grant covered 67 percent of the average cost of college. Today, it covers 27 percent of the average cost of college. Interestingly enough, the average age in the U.S. Senate is 62 years old. When we were in college, we were content with a system that provided 67 percent of aid. Today, it covers only 27 percent. That doesn't seem fair to me. I know the reasons why, but we have to figure out as a country, working with States and local governments, how we're actually going to provide a deal that's different than the one people are getting today and looks more like the one people had when we had a rising middle class in this country. Otherwise, we're not going to have a rising middle class in this country. In 2012, if you were in the bottom quartile of income earners in the United States, the net average cost of the average college to you after student aid is accounted for, after Pell grant is accounted for, was, I think, 85 percent of your annual income. If you were in the top quartile, it cost you 15 percent of your annual income. I don't know what that is except a recipe for cementing income inequality in this country rather than relieving it. I wish that the—I'm sorry to go on so long, but I wonder if the panel—and I'll start with you, Dr. Scott-Clayton—can give us your best idea for how we can deal with this. Dr. Alexander has spoken to it a little bit, but why don't we just go down the list? Or tell me that I'm wrong. Give me the evidence that actually our system of K–12 education and our system of higher education and the billions of dollars that we are spending on those are actually diminishing income inequality in the United States of America. If you've got that evidence, I'd love to see it. (Bennet, Senate, 6/3/2015)

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It strikes me that as part of this conversation—and I'd love to get the range of thoughts from the table—that we should be talking about a couple of additional things. One is making sure that students have really good information when they decide to take out loans as to what the predictability is going to be of their ability to repay it. Today, we just don't have that data. We just don't have the ability—in part because of a ban in our statutes on something called the student uni[t] record—to actually tell students what the average graduate of a particular institution is making, how many of them are employed. The second thing we can do is have a little bit tougher accountability for schools, at least to catch the outliers who aren't delivering results. Right now, the only hammer we have is this default rate, this cohort default rate. If 30 percent of your graduates aren't paying back their—no, are defaulting on their loans, not paying back their loans, then you'll get cutoff from student aid. That's it. We have no other way to try to push schools toward accountability. Should this be part of our conversation about affordability, giving students some more information about the return on investment that they're going to make, and perhaps talking about some—you know, maybe even, at the outset, light touch tools that the Federal Government can use to try to ratchet up the accountability for results that schools are getting?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Thank you so much for this question and comment. The first thing I want to respond to is the need for better data on student outcomes, as well as better data about student loan repayment and default. (Murphy, Senate, 6/3/2015)

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Dr. Scott-Clayton, I wanted to come back to you. You noted that the Pell grant can cover tuition and fees for some students like those who enroll at community colleges, and more students ought to recognize just how affordable college really is. Students and families in my State tell me that tuition isn't their only expense. It's, in fact, less than half of what they have to pay just to survive. The Federal data that I see shows that students from the lowest income families have to pay almost \$12,000 a year for college after the grant aid. I wanted to ask you do you think we have done enough to make college more affordable, or should we be providing additional support for low-income students?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. I don't think we've done enough. I do think we can do better. I do think, absolutely, for community college students, tuition is not usually even the biggest barrier. (Murray , Senate, 6/3/2015)

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Appendix B.5. Discursive strategies addressing: How do legislators amplify and mitigate witness statements? (sub-question 5)

Mitigation and intensification strategies	Examples
Request for thoughts and research-based insights	<p>So, following in Mrs. Foxx's questioning, just briefly, I ask of all of you, if any of you know of any state or any—excuse me—any study showing the relation between the ever increasing higher education costs and the lack of any real present disincentive to student debt. Any studies that show any comparison, any relation of high cost of education versus the student debt? (Walberg, House, 3/13/2013)</p>
	<p>Is there any information out there - speaking of reports and studies - is there any information showing any difference between students that come from academic experiences that were highly associated with choice schools, in the sense that they made their own choice. The parents worked together, they picked schools of choice, academies, charter schools, whatever else in comparison to those who just a general followed the local option? (Walberg to Heller, House, 4/24/2013)</p>
	<p>Dr. Heller, one of the things that we grappled with here I am sure way before I ever came on the committee but certainly since I've been here is reporting requirements that institutions have. We had a witness testify here a couple or 2 or 3 years ago and he brought in a whole stack of three ring binders for just things that the college, that the institution had to do and so I am interested in your suggestions, your thoughts about how we might be helpful in scaling back some of these requirements, but not harming the information that students like Mr. Garrido need to make informed decisions. (Kline, House, 4/24/2013)</p>
	<p>Dr. Perna, what specific gaps do you see in available research regarding the success of college access programs, and what do you see as the repercussions of these gaps in terms of best serving low-income and first-generation students? (Foxx, House, 4/30/2015; during early part of the hearing) And, Dr. Perna, while I am a big proponent of doing more research, and particularly honing in on what works and what doesn't work, in many cases we know what works and what doesn't work. (Foxx, House, 4/30/2015; during closing remarks)</p>

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Mr. SCOTT. What are your findings about the financial strain as a factor in completing college?

Ms. Perna. Financial strain is certainly an important issue, and it plays out in several different respects. So, as you discussed, there are only so many mechanisms that students have available to pay the cost of college. One is loans, and there is evidence that shows that some students are averse to taking out loans, and so, you know, that is one source--

Mr. SCOTT. And so they drop out?

Ms. PERNA. Drop out or choose not to attend at all. Or they decide to work to try to pay the cost through paid employment, and that is also a tremendous source of strain for students.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. (Scott to Perna, 4/30/2015)

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I wanted to ask you as well on the question of Pell Grants. What is your sense in some of the research you have done other than the obvious question or the obvious challenge of having access to enough sources to fund a higher education? What other lessons can we draw from your research as it relates to Pell Grants? (Casey to Perna, Senate, 10/5/2009)

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Sometimes I have seen data that when you go across Pennsylvania or across almost county by county, the numbers are, depending on what year you are looking at, closer to 25 percent of the population or lower. Also cited in this section, was the percentage of adults in Pennsylvania--this is just one age group, 25 to 34, who hold at least an associate's degree--is lower than Canada, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. Anything you want to add to that in terms of just the numbers? (Casey to Perna, Senate, 10/5/2009)

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Senator CASEY. You had mentioned some data with regard to the number of hours worked as impacting this question. Can you recite that again, the 15 or more hours a week number?

Ms. PERNA. There is a lot that we do not know about working. Working is now the reality for most college students. So 75 percent of dependent undergraduates, 80 percent of independent undergraduates are working while enrolled. The average number of hours for dependent students is 24 hours per week, while for independent students averaging 34.5 hours per week. These are really high numbers.

Senator CASEY. Say that again. The average--

Ms. PERNA. Dependent undergraduates who are working--they are enrolled part-time and full-time, but among those who are working are averaging 24 hours per week. Independent students, again who are enrolled full-time and part-time, are averaging 34 hours a week of work.

Senator CASEY. We heard today a couple are working 40. Ms. PERNA. That is right.

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Selectively highlight  
witness testimony

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We know from research that if you work less than 15 hours per week on campus, that can have some benefits to your integration into the campus community, but clearly most students are not following that recommendation. (Casey to Perna, Senate, 10/5/2009)

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Dr. Heller, you mentioned this early Federal Pell grant commitment demonstration program, and the concept behind it is a message, "You will be able to afford college, and therefore utilize your high school experience productively because there is a future for you." Now you talked about the need to fund this. Has it been funded at all, and do we have any results as a model, or is this a vision that has yet to be experimented with? (Merkely, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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Dr. Vedder, we have long valued your opinion on the college cost crisis with a lot of talk here, but no talk that I have heard is really talking about lowering the costs of education. We are talking about putting more money in and giving more money to students and you have written about that. You understand the problem, and how it is facing the country. (Miller, House, May 21, 2009; emphasis added)

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I have another question. Dr. Singer-Gabella pointed out, rightly so, that there is quite a bimodal distribution of school performance, with schools at one end that are doing well with respect to achievement, and a significant number of schools, typically at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, that aren't doing well. (Bonamici, House, 2/27/2014)

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While these efforts are well intentioned, there is a growing concern they are not reaching their goals. For example, according to a study published earlier this year by one of our witnesses, Dr. Laura Perna, the percentage of low-income students who have attained a bachelor's degree has increased by just 3 percent since 1970. By comparison, the percentage of the wealthiest students who attained a bachelor's degree has increased by 40 percent. In other words, despite the federal government's growing investment in access and completion programs over the last 5 decades, graduation rates for the most disadvantaged students have barely budged. We have a responsibility to students, families, and taxpayers to ensure all of our spending in higher education deliver the intended results. Understanding how to strengthen these efforts for low-income and first-generation students is why our witnesses are here today. (Foxx, House, 4/30/2015; opening remarks)

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What is wrong with us, as the greatest nation in the world, that we can't figure out a system to match the people who are unemployed with those jobs? I mean, it isn't a lack of money; it is a lack of will somewhere. And I think Dr. Perna pointed it out, too. Whose responsibility--who is going to accept this responsibility and how do we define these? (Foxx to Perna, House, 4/30/2015)

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And it seems to me the examples you all have given, particularly Dr. May, Dr. Alexander, and I think the research, probably, that Dr. Perna is showing, is that the colleges have to take some more responsibility in this area. And it is a vested interest of theirs to do that. It is a vested interest of the states to do this, to say, "We want to invest more money in our students and not just rely on the federal government to do these things." (Foxx, House, 4/30/2015; closing remarks)

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There were a couple numbers in here I wanted to highlight. Doctor, this is from your testimony, I think, citing the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Twenty-eight percent of adults aged 25 and older in the United States held at least a bachelor's degree in 2006, up from 26 percent in 2000 and 21 percent in 1990. But other nations are increasing the educational attainments at a faster rate. We are at basically aged 25 and older in the United States, a bachelor's degree at least: 21 percent in 1990; 26 percent in 2000; and 28 percent in 2006. Not very high. Some people think those numbers are higher than they are. (Casey to Perna, Senate, 10/5/2009)

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Senator CASEY. I wanted to ask you about that simplification question.

Ms. PERNA. We need to go in that direction. There is an interesting study by Eric Bettinger and Bridget Terry Long that was released about using H&R Block to—having people who use H&R Block have their FAFSA form populated by that data that they need to complete anyhow for the IRS. Their study shows that when that process happens, students are more likely to apply for aid, they are more likely to receive aid, they receive higher amounts of aid. So, there may be some lessons there. We are collecting a lot of data from students and their families about their financial well-being. Why can we not coordinate that so students do not have to report information twice?

Senator CASEY. I guess if you are faced with the complexity of a lot of other systems, this becomes an added burden of paperwork and detail. It becomes a nightmare. And I guess with more and more families having two incomes and people working longer and longer hours and a longer week, they do not get to the paperwork as readily as they might. It is complicated.

Ms. PERNA. Right. And certainly from a policy perspective, we want to ensure that those who are most needy or most deserving are getting the resources, but on the other hand, these are the populations that we are often over-burdening in all kinds of other ways to prove that they are poor or moderate income and they have a need for resources. There are some important questions there about how that works.

Senator CASEY. Dr. Gillen or Tony, do you want to add anything to that?

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Mr. GILLEN. Yes. I would just like to second what she said. (Casey to Perna, Senate, 10/5/2009)

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Mr. Chairman, there's one thing that has come up here that has come up at other hearings. Dr. Goldrick-Rab mentioned it, and that's simplicity. I love the phrase, text-heavy. I'm going to remember that, because so much of what we read is text-heavy around here. And having been the Secretary of Education, what really tends to happen is that well-meaning regulations just pile up. That happens in every department. But that's something that we may be able to agree on here. (Alexander, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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You've talked about a number of the issues I was going to ask about. I was very happy to hear you, Dr. Goldrick-Rab, talk about what we call traditional students becoming no longer traditional students, because if you go on campuses--and Ms. Brooks is a perfect example of who you might look at and say is traditional, but very nontraditional, trying to raise a family and do all the work and everything at the same time. (Murray to Goldrick-Rab, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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And, Dr. Goldrick-Rab, you talked about these financial letters, these aid letters, these award letters. I think you pointed out that sometimes an award letter will have a loan in it and it won't say it's a loan. (Franken, Senate, 4/16/2013)

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Dr. Heller, I especially appreciated in your testimony where you raised some concern that I share about the problems of valuing a college based on the wages of an individual upon graduation. (Bonamici, House, 4/24/2013)

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It is to Dr. Heller's point, completion. Again, age, race, income. If I were a working adult, I would like to know how good that college does at getting people like me to graduation. How do we pay for it? I think Dr. Heller touched on that very nicely. (Foxx, House, 4/24/2013)

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Well I would like to make a couple of observations based on the comments that I have heard today. I appreciate the emphasis, Dr. Hurd, that you have put on evidence-based and data-driven results. I am going to submit some questions to you after today's hearing that I didn't want to try to—I knew you wouldn't probably have the answers at your ready and so I am going to ask you some questions about that. In reading your testimony, Dr. Heller, I have noted our talking about traditional versus nontraditional and I have challenged other panels that we have had. When you are talking about 70 percent of students going to community colleges and proprietary schools, that is what I believe is the total in your testimony, the term traditional doesn't mean anything anymore. Certainly if—I can't remember the exact amount but the number of students in 4-year schools that are between ages 18 and 24 is something like 14 percent now or at least that is making up 14 percent of our college going population. So I am challenging people to come up with a better title than traditional-nontraditional because the nontraditional have become the traditional or they are certainly the majority. I am again, intrigued by the emphasis that all of you have put on the word information as opposed to data. I think that is very, very important that we pay attention to those and I appreciate that a lot. Again, the emphasis on outcomes. Many, many years ago I thought we were going to get to that point. I have been around for a long time. I have been involved with Southern Association, accreditations, and been railing against inputs for a long time and saying when are we going to get to where we talk about outcomes. And so I appreciate very much the emphasis, Mr. Reindl, that you say that the governors are putting on this and I think it is really, really important that we do that. (Foxx, House, 4/24/2013)

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Senator BENNET. That's where the motive force comes from here, not from another commission, not from other reports. And I wonder whether I've got that totally wrong, or whether there's ways in which we can, again, create a line incentive so that consumers of this stuff are actually able to make rational decisions that drive the system inexorably to improve rather than for it just to sit here in the same conversation.

Ms. KOERNER. I think that it really rests, if you're looking for measures, in partnerships. We

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don't prepare teachers by ourselves. I think what keeps being brought up is this ivory tower and courses that don't matter and all that, and those of us who think deeply about this and put it into practice don't think that way. We are in partnership with school districts.

Senator BENNET. Let's rest there for a minute. That's a very, very important point to me, because I've seen the same thing that you've seen. So we should be asking ourselves, both in terms of the ESEA reauthorization and the Higher Ed reauthorization—which, in my mind, shouldn't be two separate things, but there's nothing we can do about that. It is what it is—whether or not we are incentivizing those kinds of partnerships. (Bennet, Senate, 3/25/2014)

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I want to say how much I appreciated Senator Cassidy's preamble, because I don't disagree with it. The important part of this is to think about the practical effect of how our Federal system has conspired against young people in this country over decades. It has resulted—the polite way of saying it, I guess, is the way Dr. Scott-Clayton has said. College attainment is increasingly becoming less equal—was your testimony. (Bennet, Senate, 6/3/2015)

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Following up on what Senator Alexander was asking, given what you guys all said about the information that's required, do we even need a FAFSA form, do you think? I mean, could we get rid of it all together?

Ms. CONKLIN. Absolutely.

Senator BENNET. Is that the view of everybody on the panel?

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Yes.

Ms. COOK. Yes.

Ms. LONG. Pretty much.

Senator BENNET. Senator Alexander asked the question, but he didn't get an answer. So there's an answer. There's another consensus. And I think it would be a worthy project for this committee if we were able to actually get rid of that document. (Bennet, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Encourage confirmation of preferred policy priority

Here's a second question for you about consensus. Ms. Conklin talked about one grant, one loan, one tax credit. Is that a shared view, too, or do others have a different opinion?

Ms. LONG. I agree.

Ms. COOK. We believe as long as the resources are all intact, that that doesn't take away from the total. We would agree with that. We would add one nuance that we should address, the tax credits, and look at the equity issues and how they serve low-income versus high-income students.

Ms. SCOTT-CLAYTON. Yes, I think if you could do it, that would be great.

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Senator BENNET. So there's another great consensus—one loan, one grant, one tax credit, but redesigned for the 21st century. (Bennet, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Senator Alexander. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. All of you are experts on college access. So let me ask you about testimony we heard at another hearing. We had a group of witnesses who came from different directions and all said the same thing. This is fundamentally what they said. They said, first, that the Pell grant, which is most of our Federal grant scholarships--if we only ask questions about the size of the family and what income was 2 years before, that we could put the application on a post card and simplify it. Second, that we could tell students in their junior year how much money they were eligible to get rather than have them pick a college, go to the college, and go through a very confusing process of finding out how much money they were eligible to have. And, third, because of social media, that, unlike 1965 or even 1973 or other years, we can let students know a lot in their seventh and eighth grade years. The fourth thing was that we should have a single grant, a single loan, and maybe a single tax credit. The testimony was that if we simplified Federal aid in that way, that there would be a large number of low-income students who would go to college who now don't. And, second, that we'd save a lot of money, which would permit us to provide scholarships to those students. So my question is do you agree with that? Do you think that if we simplified the Federal grant and aid system and made it possible for an application to be on a post card, answering two questions, and then told students in their junior year how much money would be available to them at any of the 6,000 institutions we have and used social media aggressively in the middle school years and simplified the programs we have to one grant, one loan, and one tax credit, do you agree that would save a lot of money and encourage a lot more low-income students to go to college? (Alexander, Senate, 1/16/2014)

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Dr. Long, I read your testimony. You talk about going through the process of financial aid, and you talk about the early process and understanding the FAFSA application, et cetera, and that's very, very important. You note that the challenges do not end with the completion of FAFSA

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and college applications, and you go on to talk about how difficult it is for families to make apples to apples comparisons. You just talked when I was here a little earlier about the confusion between what's a grant and what's a loan. I have a piece of legislation called Understanding the True Cost of College Act. It's bipartisan with Senator Grassley and Senator Rubio on it. All it is saying is that there should be a uniform financial aid letter where they use the same terminology. They use the same terms so that a subsidized Stafford loan is called a subsidized Stafford loan and not called an SS8107 so that you actually know the difference between a loan and a grant so that you can read that. So how important do you think this is? Why do you think this is important, or do you think it is? And anyone else can chime in. Ms. LONG. I absolutely believe it is important. Thank you, Senator. It is confusing when you get those letters. (Franken, Senate, 11/14/2013)

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Mr. ANDREWS. ... Dr. Vedder, I want to ask you one thing. You testified that the CBO score for the savings on direct loans did not take into account additional administrative costs or foregone corporate tax revenues. What is the source of your testimony for that statement?

Mr. VEDDER. I received that information from members of the minority.

Mr. ANDREWS. But do you know, independently know it is true?

Mr. VEDDER. I have not first-handed, scored it, and in my full testimony I made it very clear that I understand -

Mr. ANDREWS. Have you read the CBO documents that underscored this?

Mr. VEDDER. I have looked at them; I have not read them carefully.

Mr. ANDREWS. So are you sure that what you said is right?

Mr. VEDDER. I am not sure I am sounding right, but neither are you.

Mr. ANDREWS. I am not- that is why I am asking. You made the statement that they did not take into account administrative costs or foregone tax?

Mr. VEDDER. The scoring on things like - I am an economist, Representative Andrews, and I understand that the people at CBO are honest people. I am not saying that -

Mr. ANDREWS. They sure are.

Mr. VEDDER. And they are good people. They are professional people. I used to work with them. But economists make mistakes and if you look at, for example, default rates, can you predict default rates?

Mr. ANDREWS. My time is up, but I just want to be clear that you don't know whether that is true or not, right?

Mr. VEDDER. I don't know that it is true. (House, 5/21/2009)

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Disagree with or discount  
testimony

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In 1974 when the Pell Grant began, the maximum award was \$1,400. Is it your contention that had that award stayed at \$1,400 or some reasonable variant thereof, that tuitions would not have increased?

Mr. VEDDER. It is my contention if we had not put in the Pell Grant or the Student Loan Program we would have as many students enrolled in American universities today as in fact—  
Mr. BISHOP. So if I may interrupt, so if you were constructing a student financial aid portfolio now, federal, state, institutional, what would it look like from your vantage point? Would you have student aid?

Mr. VEDDER. If I were the czar which, thank God I am not—Mr. BISHOP. I am sort of thanking God I am not also, but—[Laughter.] Mr. VEDDER. You should pray every day that I am not. You should—I would not—the federal government would get out of the student loan business completely. The federal government has corrupted higher education with the disincentive effects that it has provided to universities to engage in bloated bureaucracies, arrogance, elitism, and so forth that has caused these problems. (Bishop, House, 5/21/2009)

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Dr. Lucas, I want to ask you about your proposal to switch to a different accounting method for student loans, for direct student loans at least, and this is a very abstruse, theoretical debate that has enormous consequences in the real world in which we live. I looked at the chart that you put at the bottom of page four. If we stuck to the present system, in the 10-year window between 2010 and 2020 the loan program is scored as raising \$96 billion, reducing the deficit by \$96 billion. If we switch to your method, it would be scored as adding \$140 billion to the deficit. So this is a very big deal. It is a quarter of a trillion dollar difference over a 10-year period, which has profound policy implications for how much we charge students and families and what impact it has on taxpayers. So I wanted to get into and understand the theoretical underpinnings of this. You say that the present system fails to account for the full cost of the risks associated with government credit assistance. That is the core of your argument. So in a sense, I think you are arguing that the projections that we make based upon present discount rates and default rates and what not understate the cost and overstate the benefit which therefore makes them inaccurate.

But we don't really have to have a theoretical argument about this. Since 1993, at least a third of the loans in the system have been direct student loans. What has that 20 years of history actually produced on a cash basis with respect to direct student loans?

In other words, if we added up the defaults that the taxpayers had to cover, the administrative costs the taxpayers have borne, and then subtracted from that or I guess subtracted from that, the revenues that have been collected on direct student loans and also the interest cost--we have to subtract that out--what is the cash scoreboard over the 20-year basis?

Ms. LUCAS. Okay. So to address the general issue, I just want to say a word about the concept----

Mr. ANDREWS. If I may though----

Ms. LUCAS. Okay, on the cash basis I can't give you the number. It is certainly true that the cash payments have probably covered the cash outflows from those programs.

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, if we just go back to that than for a minute. If you have that information, if any of you have that information, it would be great if you could supplement it for the record.

I truly appreciate the fact that there is a theoretical difference between cash and an accrual basic counting. I don't quite understand it, but I know there's a theoretical difference. But I think I just heard you say that if you add up over the 20-year period, the revenues that came into the federal treasury on direct student loans and subtracted from that the loan defaults the

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taxpayers had to cover, the administrative costs we had to cover, and the interest we paid to acquire the funds to make the loans, that we are running a surplus on that. Is that right?

Ms. LUCAS. When the government makes a loan, they are incurring a liability to taxpayers and that liability has a cost today. That is the logic of the accrual accounting.

Mr. ANDREWS. If I may, I get the theory, but my narrow question here was on a cash basis, I think I just heard you say that the direct loan program has produced more dollars in income than it sent out in spending. Is that correct?

Ms. LUCAS. I don't have those numbers before me. I believe that if you were to account for credit on a cash basis, which I think would be a bad idea and it is not the law you would come to a different conclusion, but that accrual is the right way to think of it.

Mr. ANDREWS. I understand--no, I appreciate the theoretical difference. Just for those of us who are not economics professors, one way I would look at this is that the core of your position as I understand it is that it costs us really more to run this program than the present accounting method reflects.

Well, I would like to look at what the actual facts are in that over a 20-year period. And it is my understanding--and I--again, please supplement the record, but it is my understanding if you add up the loan payments received and you subtract from that the cost of acquiring the capital, the administrative

costs of running the program, and the defaults taxpayers had to cover, the treasury has come out ahead on that. Is that true?

Ms. LUCAS. The fact is that the government gives students loans on terms that are far more favorable than what the private sector is willing to offer them, but at the same time, the government books those loans as showing a significant profit. And so there is a disconnect between thinking that the market price of the loan is one thing and the cost to the taxpayer is another thing. If we were to buy a tank for \$50 instead of \$1 million we can't set the price of tanks--we can't set the price of loans.

Mr. ANDREWS. I will say I know the Defense Department is glad that we don't use that in accounting. I am not sure we should use it on students either. (Andrews to Lucas, House, 3/13/2013)

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Dr. Lucas, you mentioned that one of the reasons--and correct me if I got this wrong--but one of the reasons why interest rates should increase and not be fixed is that lenders need to be assured their return on capital will increase to account for that inflation. Is that fair?

Ms. LUCAS. I said that if inflation were higher that is what the market would require.

Mr. TIERNEY. It would. All right, and you are saying if that doesn't happen that it is a cost to the taxpayer.

Ms. LUCAS. I am saying that when you fix loans as they are now when inflation goes up you are still charging students the same rates, which makes the loans further below market rates.

Mr. TIERNEY. Below market rates on that. But what if the lender was a not-for-profit? What if the lender was somebody that said, you know, I am happy to cover my costs? And I think that there is a value to covering my costs and not getting that profit back or on that basis because I think it is good public policy to have more people graduate from school, increase our productivity, our creativity, and all of that going forward, then that is a whole different consideration, right?

Ms. LUCAS. I agree with you completely that it may be good public policy to keep the interest rates on student loans low. My comments about changing the accounting for them had to do with the transparency and recognition of the true costs which would make it easier for Congress to decide to use student loans in judicious proportion to other types of aid, but as far as----

Mr. TIERNEY. So we would get to see--so we would get to see what our public policy was is what you are saying. You get transparency and you know what profit you weren't making and be able to decide whether or not that was commensurate with the policy plusses that you thought you might get. So they can make that kind of decision on that basis.

And I think that is great, but--and I think that is the kind of discussion we ought to have around here but I don't think we ought to lose sight that it is--you know, we are not a for-profit organization and we talk all the time about--our rhetoric speaks to the idea of needing more college graduates and all of our employers need it and we need it for our productivity and for our creativity and our innovation, but our policies and our interest rates still counter to that.

(Tierney, House, 3/13/2013)

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I am concerned, though, about another issue, Dr. Baum, that you brought up, and that is if students going to college or in college cannot understand from websites on the campus and the colleges what it is that is happening, what about the completion rates, what about loans and all that, I am not sure what--but they can understand it from a text message--I am not sure what

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that is saying about our college population these days. How much simpler can we make things? And maybe we need to look at who is being admitted to college if they can't understand the information. And what you continue to talk about, the obligation of the federal government, to have the material out there that they can understand, but very little has been said about the obligation of the student to understand what is out there. (Foxx, House, 11/13/2013)

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And, Dr. Baum, I am going to kind of focus on you because you are proposing the elimination of the campus-based programs, which, I will say respectfully, I think is a bad idea. And let me tell you why.

I used to administer campus-based programs. I was a financial aid director for 7 years way, way back. And what I found was the most helpful about the campus-based programs is that they were a way of, you know, what I always call putting out fires. They were a way of dealing with students whose circumstances had changed, or that the traditional programs, the external programs, the entitlement programs didn't give them what they needed.

And so to give the financial aid officer the discretion that he or she could then apply to save enrollments--I mean, we have two problems here. We have an access problem, and I think you could make an argument that one grant, one loan, one work would be assessed with an access problem, but we also have a completion problem, and I think if you were to eliminate campus-based there would be a serious concern with respect to completion.

Because if you look at it, the traditional private, not-for-profits, they discount aid, they have institutional aid, so they could address that issue. But the state schools don't really discount aid, and so unless they have endowment income or, you know, philanthropy, they are not going to have their own resources to provide. And the for-profits do very little in the way of discounting aid or what we would call traditional institutional grant aid. So I am concerned that in the overall heading of simplifying, that what we are really going to do is deny a resource to the campus aid officer that has used it, you know, millions of times a year to save enrollments. I would like to hear your comment. (Bishop, House, 11/13/2013)

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Mr. BISHOP. If I may, but if we go to one grant, one loan, one work, which is what I am hearing, one grant presumably is Pell, right? And unless we are going to restructure the way we award Pell, then, that is going to money that, I mean--and yes, we are going to add to the funding for it, but that is money that is going to be available to the student up front.

Ms. BAUM. No, so my proposal would put money in the institutions that they could use to give institutional grants to students. It wouldn't interfere with the--

Mr. BISHOP. I am not trying to be argumentative. So you are not, then, advocating one grant, one loan, one work?

Ms. BAUM. In my view, I am advocating one grant to students from the federal government.

Mr. BISHOP. Now I am thoroughly lost, but with this as a discussion perhaps we can continue. I want to go to a point that Ms. Mishory made, which I think is really, really important and none of us should lose sight of this. What you said--what I heard you say--was that the aid process ought to be simpler. I think we all agree with that. But we ought not to reduce supporting--we ought not to reduce the total amount of student financial aid that is available. And I think what is important for us to all recognize is that is precisely what we are doing. We are reducing the total amount of aid that is available to students. (Bishop, House, 11/13/2013)

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Senator ALEXANDER. But I did not hear any of you say what you think is the principle reason why States have failed to fund higher education as well today as they did 30 years ago. Anyone want to say what that is?

Mr. HELLER. Sure, Senator Alexander. I have actually written about this a lot because this question comes up. Why have States been disinvesting in higher education when we can all sit here and talk about the great benefits of higher education both to individuals, as well as to the Nation? I think the primary reason is because of politics, not economics. That both legislatures and Governors have discovered that public higher education institutions are one of the few sectors of State government that have the ability, as well as the willingness, to raise sufficient revenues on their own. With the exception of toll roads, perhaps, there are not other parts of State government that have that ability to raise their own revenues and fund their own operations. And in most States, we have very smart legislators and very smart Governors who have discovered this. They found out that as they cut appropriations or they let them grow not as fast as they had in the past, the universities do not shutdown, they maintain quality, and they do so primarily by raising tuition, as well as looking for additional sources of revenue.

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Senator ALEXANDER. I only have 1 minute left. Let me use it in this way, if I may, without interrupting.

I have my own view of the real reason, and I am pretty sure of it having watched it over that period of time, and it did not start with President Obama, and it did not even start with President George W. Bush, and it is a single word. It is Medicaid. I mean, 30 years ago, State budgets were 8 percent Medicaid; today, they are 25 percent. And I know from my own experience as you go down to the end of the budget process, you really, after you fund highways with the road tax, and the courts run a certain number of things, you get down to two pots of money. It is higher education or it is Medicaid. And as long as the Federal Government requires States to continue to fund Medicaid in a preferential way, public higher education, in my own view, is going to be seriously damaged. (Alexander, Senate, 7/19/2012)

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