

## **B. PEP Student Interview**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- *Introduction (name and CFAT affiliation)*

- *Purpose of Interview:* We've been working on our Political Engagement Project with 21 college courses and programs to learn more about how different undergrads feel about political engagement. As part of the project, we've been talking to a few students from all of the courses in the project to try to learn more about their experiences, and we'd like to learn more about your experiences in **(fill in course/ program)**.

- *Explanation of confidentiality and permission to tape:* We want you to be as completely honest and candid as you can be – it's important for us to learn about both negative and positive experiences and reactions. The interviews won't be used to evaluate you in any way and they are completely confidential. The only people will have access to the interview transcripts will be members of our project group at the Carnegie Foundation. If we refer to your ideas or quote you we won't use your name. We'd like your permission to tape the interview so we can go back to make sure we didn't miss anything important. Is that o.k. with you?

### **II. STUDENTS' GOALS FOR THE COURSE/PROGRAM & OTHER RELATED EXPERIENCES**

1. Why did you first enroll in this course/program? (*if more prompting is needed: Were you mainly trying to help yourself academically or professionally, or did you have other reasons or goals?*)

*If they mention any interests related to civic or political engagement, ask:*

1a. How did you first get interested in that? (*is it something they've been interested in for a long time, how did they get interested?, etc.*)

1b. Have you done other things in the past that connected with similar kinds of interests or experiences?

2. We're particularly interested in learning whether there are connections between community service and political engagement. What's your experience? (*if more prompting is needed: Had you been involved in much community service before enrolling in this course/program or were you drawn to it because of an interest in community involvement?*)

2a. Do you see any connections between community and political involvement or do they seem pretty separate?

3. How does this course/program seem to fit in with your other activities and experiences? Do you feel like it overlapped a lot with other things you've been involved with, or was it was a pretty different experience for you?

### **III. GENERAL REACTIONS TO THE COURSE/PROGRAM**

4. Are you glad that you participated in this course/program? How much effort would you say you put into it?

5. What are the 2 or 3 things that stand out most in your mind about the course/program? These might be things you really enjoyed, or things that surprised you or frustrated you.

6. Were there any activities or experiences that you connected with really intensely? If so, what were they?

7. Were there any things you found really challenging or difficult? If so, how did you deal with that?

8. Did you feel motivated or inspired by anything that you did or learned about or by people you met, worked with, or learned about? If so, please explain.

#### **IV. PERSPECTIVE ON COURSE/PROGRAM LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

9. We know that the course/program involved some different kinds of learning experiences, like (*fill in specific course or program activity related to key learning activities listed below*). Were you very involved with that?

**Focal learning activities or pedagogies**

*Political placement (internship, service-learning, etc.)*

*Political action project (getting something done on campus or in the community)*

*Political simulation (Mock Congress, Model U.N., etc.)*

*Interaction with political speakers or mentors*

*Political discussion and deliberation*

10. How would you describe that experience from your point of view?

11. Were there any things you especially liked or disliked about it? Please be as specific as possible.

#### **V. PERSPECTIVE ON COURSE/PROGRAM GOALS**

12. One thing we want to try to better understand in this Project is (*fill in focal goal from list*)

**Focal goals**

*(politically engaged identity, or how people gain a sense of themselves as politically engaged);*

*(political efficacy or confidence, or how people gain a sense that they can contribute effectively to political processes)*

*(political discussion, deliberation, and decision-making, or how people learn to discuss and evaluate political issues)*

*(political skills and tools for political action, or how people learn to use skills that are needed for various kinds of political involvement).*

Do you feel that the course/program changed your (**fill in focal goal – such as level of political skills**) or made you think differently about it?

#### **VI. ANALYSIS OF COURSE/PROGRAM EFFECTS**

13. Do you feel you learned some things that are memorable or useful – that you will take with you in the future or that you can use in other parts of your life? (These could be ideas, skills, ways of seeing things etc.)

13a. If so, what were they and how did they come about – through what activities, experiences, readings, discussions, etc., and how do you see yourself drawing on this in the future?

14. Did the experience change the way you think about what counts as politics or what it means to be politically involved?

14a. *If so*, how — what did you think before, and what do you think now?

14b. *If not*, what do these ideas mean to you?

15. Do you feel like the course/program helped you gain a better understanding of how political issues or social policies affect your life and the lives of others? If so, how did that happen?

16. And what have you learned how to do as a result of this course/program— did you improve any of your skills or learn any new skills?

16a. Were there times during the course or program that you practiced doing that?

16b. Did you receive feedback on it? If so, from whom and how?

16c. Do you think you are likely to use those skills in the future?

17. Do you feel that you're different in some way as a result of experiences in this course or program, maybe in terms of your level of understanding or interest, or in terms of your values or goals, or in terms of what kind of person you are or want to be?

17a. *If so*, what were you like before and what are you like now?

18. Did your experiences in the course/program change your attitude toward politics – make you feel more or less connected with it, more optimistic or pessimistic that there is a way for you to connect, more confident of yourself and your ability to contribute? (Please explain what and how, etc.)

19. We've talked a lot about things you've learned and how this course/program has affected you. How would you say that it compares with other courses you've taken or things you've been involved with at college, in terms of your political knowledge, interest, or involvement?

## **V. HANDLING OF CONTROVERSY**

20. People often disagree strongly about political issues. Was there much disagreement in this course/program? How was it handled?

21. Some people think that trying to persuade others to change their political views is wrong because everyone is entitled to their own opinion. What do you think?

21a. Was this an issue that came up in this course/program?

21b. If you disagreed with someone in your course/program about a political issue did you feel comfortable voicing it?

21c. Did you or anyone else in the class ever express an unpopular view? If so, tell more about that. (What happened, how did people respond, etc.)

**VI. FINAL THOUGHTS & THANK YOU**

22. Is there any thing else you think we should know (about this course/program, your experiences, etc.)?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. It is really helpful to the project.