APPENDIX C – MEETING TRANSCRIPT OF THE ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP PERSPECTIVES PANEL

MR. ARUM: Thank you very much. Richard Arum, Professor of Sociology and Education at New York University, Education Research Program Director at the Social Science Research Council and co-author with Josipa Roksa, Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia, of "Academically Adrift Limited Learning on College Campuses."

I'm speaking here today as an individual, not as a representative of any organizational entity. I am grateful for the opportunity to address the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity, and to support its work advising the Secretary of Education on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

I have been asked to speak today briefly on what is working and not working in the current system of recognition, accreditation and institutional student aid eligibility.

Unfortunately at this moment, given my current research with University of Virginia

Assistant Professor Josipa Roksa, I am profoundly

skeptical that the current system of recognition,

accreditation and institutional student aid

eligibility is functioning adequately to ensure that

students are being exposed to high quality

educational experiences that will facilitate their

undergraduate learning.

As we have reported in our recently-

released book, "Academically Adrift Limited Learning

on College Campuses," and our report "Improving

Undergraduate Learning," large numbers of students

are progressing through higher education without

being asked to apply themselves academically.

We found that 50 percent of students

reported that they had not taken a single course in a

typical semester where they had been asked to write

more than 20 pages over the course of the semester.

Thirty-two percent reported that they had not taken a

single course in a typical semester where they had

read on average more than 40 pages per week.

Research by labor economist Philip Babcock

and Mindy Marks has identified a 50 percent drop over

the past several decades in the amount of time four-year college students spend studying and preparing for a class. In our own work, we found that 35 percent of students reported that they studied alone five or fewer hours per week.

We can assume that little was being asked of these students, since their transcripts indicated that their grade point averages were 3.16. With such low levels of academic engagement, it is not surprising that when we looked for gains on a state-of-the-art assessment measure of higher order skills, the Collegiate Learning Assessment's performance tasks, that measures critical thinking, complex reasoning and written communication, and has been adopted for use by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's planned cross-national assessment of student higher education performance, NIHELO, we found limited gains as we tracked students' progress through college.

Forty-five percent of students in our study showed no significant improvement on this assessment over the first two years of college; 36

percent of students showed no significant improvement over four years. We found that 23 percent of variation in learning, as measured by the CLA, occurs across colleges, while the majority of variation in student outcomes occurs within colleges, where some students are applying themselves and learning, while others are not.

Our test score results are largely consistent with results from the Wabash study being led by Charles Blake, that relies on a different measure of higher order skills, the ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, CAAP. Our reports of academic engagement are largely consistent with those found in the National Study of Student Engagement.

These findings clearly demonstrate that something is amiss in terms of undergraduate learning, and by extension that the existing system of recognition, accreditation and eligibility for student aid has been inadequate to the task of ensuring program quality.

While accreditation processes in recent

years have increasingly asked colleges and

universities to engage in self-assessment exercises,

and to measure student learning outcomes, too little

has been accomplished through these efforts.

Roksa and I believe that these reviews

have been largely inadequate to the task because more

powerful organizational incentives exist in the

environment to focus institutional attention on other

goals. Colleges and universities have been

increasingly asked by states to focus on student

retention, an important and worthy objective.

College ranking systems have focused

administrative attention on other measures, such as

entering student test scores, the number of

applications received and rejected, and faculty

research productivity. Objective measures of student

learning in terms of growth on standardized

assessments of general or student-specific skills are

typically not reported nor valued in these

institutional accountings.

Given the problems of limited learning on

college campuses, and the recognition that the

existing system of recognition, accreditation and eligibility for student aid has today proven inadequate to the task of addressing these problems, many well-intended actors, such as the honorable panel members I am currently addressing, might be tempted to consider imposing an external accountability system on higher education that requires standardized assessments with associated institutional sanctions and rewards attached.

Roksa and I believe that such a system would be ill-advised at this time. We believe that the existing measures available are not adequate to base an accountability system upon, and unintended negative consequences resulting from the introduction of such a system would likely be quite pronounced.

However, individuals and institutions must take greater responsibility for addressing the problem of limited learning on college campuses, with accountability best operating through existing governance structures at lower levels of the system.

As an alternative to imposing an external accountability system on higher education, the

federal government could encourage the strengthening of existing efforts of institutions to assess student learning, design plans to improve learning outcomes, and monitor progress towards specific goals set in their improvement plans.

Rather than impose a federally defined and standardized accountability system on all institutions, colleges and universities could be encouraged through existing mechanisms, such as accreditation, to assess student outcomes on a broad set of indicators that would include general higher order skills, subject-specific knowledge, as well as other academic competencies.

Moreover, institutions could be encouraged to identify areas in need of improvement and develop specific plans and time lines for addressing them. While the lack of standardization of measures across schools would create problems of comparability across institutions, it is important to emphasize that the vast majority of variation in student learning is found within schools.

Given this, it is sensible to focus our

efforts on strengthening mechanisms that would

require colleges and universities to look first not

for exemplary colleges down the street, but for

pockets of excellence in areas requiring improvement

internally, in terms of measured program quality,

academic rigor and demonstrated student learning.

We believe that the most useful role for

the federal government to play in this area is not

through imposing accountability schemas, but instead

to support the advancement of research infrastructure

and the development of appropriate instruments to

assess undergraduate learning outcomes, and to

provide incentives through school improvement grant

programs to encourage college and universities to

design programs to enhance undergraduate learning and

demonstrate measurable improvement in student

performance.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Thank you very much.
Mr. Pryor.

MR. PRYOR: I guess that will take some

pressure off questions for me.

(Laughter.)

MR. PRYOR: Hi. I'm John Pryor. I'm the Director of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. About a dozen years ago, I was appointed to a Committee to write sections of Dartmouth College's reaccreditation self report.

I ran a small student affairs research office at Dartmouth at the time and worked for Lee Pelton, currently the outgoing president at Willamette University, and at the time the dean of the college at Dartmouth. Lee hired me to provide his division with information on the student experience and evaluation of various programs and policies focused on institutional improvement. I frankly knew little about accreditation.

Luckily, the upcoming Northeast Association for Institutional Research conference had a session on accreditation with a staff member of NACIQI, and I dutifully attended that session, the only one at that conference on the topic of reaccreditation.

Bob Fro from NIASC started out with the

statement that times had changed. Accreditation in
the northeast was more rigorous, he said, and it was
not sufficient to coast on reputation as one
prominent institution had done, and limit your
discussion to "We hire excellent faculty. We admit
exceptional students, and then we get out of the
way."

That institution he told the audience, to
my chagrin, was Dartmouth College. Certainly that
should not have been sufficient, and indeed we worked
hard on that next report. We mined the data sources
I'd been using, the Cooperative Institutional
Research Program's freshman and senior surveys, done
the CABE's academic integrity surveys, some surveys
from the Consortium on the Financing of Higher
Education, coupled with institutional data from the
registrar and other sources.

I'm sure that you're aware of and others
speaking to you have already pointed out that
accreditation is now the driving force behind
assessment on college campuses. From NIHELO's 2009
report, more than you think, less than we need

learning outcomes assessment in American higher education provided survey results from over 1,500 institutions of higher ed, which indicated that accreditation was the primary use of assessment data on campus. Institutional improvement was lower down on the list.

As the Director of CIRP, I interact with a wide variety of faculty, institutional researchers and other administrators on campuses across the country. My experience is that there's a difference in conducting assessment for accountability and institutional improvement.

Contrast my experience at the Northeast Association for Institutional Research a dozen years ago and the current day experience at the Southern Association for Institutional Research conference.

The conference is dominated by presentations that deal with some aspects of going through SAC's reaccreditation. If I present on some aspect of research funding from CIRP, people tell me they would love to come, but they have to attend some session on SACs.

I finally gave in and presented on how to use CIRP data in SAC's accreditation, and then people came. My point's not that people need to come to my presentations, but that the office with major responsibility for research that can be used to improve the educational experience for students, the Institutional Research Office, is so busy with two types of activities that it cannot adequately branch out and conduct, or participate in, what we might consider under the academic scholarship perspective.

They're desperately trying, and in many cases failing, to get students to respond to these direct assessments of student learning such as the CLA. Not only does it take up a great deal of time, but also a majority of the budget. I recently attended a presentation by a school showing CLA and other data, discussing all the efforts to gather the information, which they felt did not give them any real insight into this process, and calculated that it cost them about $150,000 in direct costs and staff time to complete the study.

The stakes are high, and so even though

they might not feel these assessments are the best or

the easiest to administer, or the best use of limited

resources, they do it because the stakes are high,

and they know that the institution down the road

passed with the CLA or CAAP or the test formerly

known as MAAP.

So they're not going to break out of the

mold, when they end up spending so much of the

resources on establishing the direct learning of 100

students, that leaves many other potential research

projects aimed at institutional improvement as just

wishful thinking. It leaves very little time to

think about the results from those 100 students, as

opposed to just report on them.

The other huge time sink, while I have a

group of chancellors and presidents and provosts in

the room, gets in the way of interesting and

innovative research into student learning at the

local level is all the time spent on responding to

the ranking surveys, like U.S. News and World Report.

Huge amounts of time, money are spent

responding to these requests, and putting systems in

place to track the information that's used to help

sell magazines on your institutional dime. Then the

next sink of time is trying to figure out why you

went from number 78 to number 77 in the rankings.

Our data on the importance of rankings to

the actual students looking to attend your

institutions, is that it is fairly minor. Only 17

percent of incoming first year students this year

reported that the rankings were very important in

deciding where to go to college.

In my experience, the people who pay

attention to these very skeptical rankings are more

presidents and boards, not students and families

trying to figure out where to go to college.

So this is time better spent, in my

opinion again, on local research into student

learning. If accreditation were more than a

pass/fail result, we might not have to endure so many

private ranking systems.

I will say I think the academic community

should be leading the research on direct measures of

student learning, and establishing connections

between direct and indirect measures.

When the Director of Student Health prescribes aspirin for a headache, she does not then conduct a study to look into the result of aspirin on headaches in those students. It's been established in the medical literature.

It would be a waste of time and money to do so, and would impact her ability to actually interact with students and serve their health needs.

One might say the same in the case of student learning. We must further the academic research that links direct and indirect measures, and frankly it's the indirect measures, such as faculty-student interaction, student engagement with learning and demonstration of more modern pedagogy in the classroom that leads to institution improvement.

If all you have is this demonstration of unchanging aggregate CLA scores, and cannot tie that back to student behaviors and attitudes towards learning, or the interaction with faculty or pedagogy, then all you have is the need to improve, not the how to improve.

Yes, I do believe that it's important to assess and demonstrate student learning, but the emphasis on this has resulted in a lot of money and time in this area, with little ability or understanding of how to improve.

I would much rather see resources going to large-scale projects that seek to demonstrate the connection between direct and indirect measures, similar to drug trials, and then have the local researchers having the ability to focus on institutional improvement.

Projects like Richard's "Academically Adrift," Charlie Blake's Wabash project, the work we do at CIRP and that NACIQI does are critical in moving us forward in improving student learning. But so are the efforts of hundreds of researchers at the local level.

If all we have them do is spend their time administering CLA, completing forms and figuring out why we dropped from 78 to 77 in the rankings, we will not be able to dedicate as much effort to institutional improvement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Thank you very much.
Amy please.

MS. WELLS-DOLAN: My name is Amy Wells-
Dolan. I'm an associate professor of Higher
Education at the University of Mississippi. I teach
graduate courses in higher education history,
philanthropy and public policy, college student
development and student services.

My research focuses the history of higher
education in the south, especially as it's related to
philanthropy, race, class and gender. In sum, I've
worked at seven postsecondary institutions, six of
them in the South, including a women's college, and
I've taught at a community college.

I have lived with students in residence
halls and advised Greek organizations. My
perspective on accreditation has been shaped by my
participation in two activities, the first being my
work as the primary project facilitator and author of
our university SACS-required quality enhancement plan
for improving student writing.

The second activity included my service in

the SACS peer review process, as an off-site

reviewer, to me a process, of course, that emphasizes

compliance with established basic standards of

practice.

To me, the greatest threat to fiscal

integrity is lack of involvement of faculty in

institutional planning and decision-making. Faculty

can keep check on institutional initiatives, spending

that is not about students and learning.

But the growth in part-time faculty

threatens that important check, because the faculty

are not there over time or have the power within the

institution to address problems with administration

and the growth of administration.

My frustration with the peer review

process involved the fact that I was learning great

things about institutional practices that I wanted to

really share, but the parameters around that

involvement required me to keep that secret.

I fear that the good practices are not

showing up in scholarship on higher education

administration, so that body of knowledge is lost.

As a higher education historian, I think the

challenges of mass higher education today and the

emotional needs of students are significant,

especially in high poverty states like mine.

These risks of poor education are felt

more than ever for graduates of schools assessed last

in most of the good measures and first in most of the

bad ones. Taking risks when you are judged so far

behind requires outside of the box thinking, teaching

and leadership, and in my state, and pioneering

approach to educate students to create jobs, not just

to get them.

The idealized past about student learning

is a menace to my work, much like that idealized past

is a menace to my work of teaching educational

history at my university, an institution ever

identified with and changed by the 1962 integration

of James Meredith.

The university's path since integration

has shown that as the institution has become more

diverse, it has also become stronger academically.

In the South, the cumulative effect of

accreditation has resulted in raised expectation for standard practice. Without these shared expectations for standard practice, institutions could easily backslide using exigency or declining resources, to adapt practice on the local level, where injustice and poor quality plays out most severely for students.

Richard Arum's work begs increased exploration of the outcomes of general education, the curriculum plan for the first two undergraduate years where he saw few gains in student learning. The later modest gains in student learning that Arum and his colleague observed may result from the convergence of student interests with the curriculum.

Yet my work with the quality enhancement plan emphasized the extent to which institutional processes are married to this curriculum convention. Simply put, due to educational requirements, general education requirements, it is very difficult to sponsor innovation in one area of undergraduate study without disrupting another.

All of this, combined with the recent

article in the Chronicle by David Glenn about using

students' grades in later sources to look at early

course outcomes, attests to the difficulty of

assessment, in this case using students' grades in

later courses for measuring outcomes.

In fact, I found that my involvement in

the quality enhancement plan to be the most

meaningful and challenging experience of my faculty

career. The QEP required our institution to look

forward, to establish a shared vision for improved

student learning around improved student writing, and

to create a plan to make the vision a reality.

We used institutional data, listened to

internal and external stakeholders' voices, and we

practiced sound stewardship for institutional

resources.

In the absence of research precision and

increased guidance from the higher education research

community, the QEP process stands out for me as an

out of the box activity and valuable rival to the

rigid assessment enterprise grown up on many

campuses, an enterprise that for all the labor has

resulted in little real faculty involvement or improved student learning.

To me, an assessment and accreditation activities are most effective and engaging to faculty when kept simple and real, where institutional data is not secret and open conversations about student learning take place, and imagining and planning for future improvement occurs.

Again, for me the greatest threat to instructional quality involves faculty, still with their shortcomings being further distance for matters of curriculum planning and development, quality control and institutional decision-making.

The QEP addressed this threat, because it required broad-based participation, and it was fairly simple in concept and design, and it involved faculty in vital operational, as well as strategic planning.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Thank you very much for all your presentations. Members of the Committee have questions? Yes, Bill.

COMMITTEE MEMBER McCLAY: I want to express appreciation to all the panelists, but

particularly Professor Arum for being here. I admire

your work. It's painful reading, but for those of us

who work in higher education, I think very necessary

and you've really shaken things up in a constructive

way and promoted a higher level of discussion about

these matters.

I just want to ask you a question not

about the critical side of the book, but your

prescriptions, which seem to me less compelling. But

specifically you sort of tucked into your remarks a

pitch for the use of the accreditation process as one

of the means of achieving educational improvement.

That cuts against, I think, some of the

other testimony that we've heard today, and I wonder

what your response would be to not necessarily any

specific point that was made, but the general point

of view that, I think, has been coming across from

some of our speakers, that a low but solid standard

of accreditation may be best, that when accreditors

try to do too much, they're likely to run into

troubles if they fail even to do the minimum

adequately.

How do you respond to that general line as it's been coming out this morning?

DR. ARUM: First, thank you for your generous comments about our work. We believe that, you know, focusing on the regulatory framework, whether it's accreditation or something beyond that, is focusing on the wrong thing. The problem is not inadequate regulation; the problem is misaligned organizational incentives in the environment.

So you cannot fix this problem by amping up the regulatory framework. I understand people's well-intended motivation and interest in doing that, but I believe it will have no effect in changing outcomes, unless you change the organizational incentives that exist both in the environment and internal to the organizations.

COMMITTEE MEMBER McCLAY: But given the fact that it is a general problem, doesn't some measure of the solution have to come from a general direction?

DR. ARUM: Well, you know, you have to --
we have to have actors lower in the system, including

the accreditors take responsibility for this problem,

and the trustees of colleges and universities

focusing on this problem, and state overseers

focusing on this problem, and so it's part of the

solution.

Now you know, one of the findings in the

book that didn't get much attention is that we found

in every college and university, we looked at some

kids that were applying themselves, were experiencing

rigorous academic instruction, and were learning at

adequate high rates. There were pockets of -- well-

performing pockets in every place we looked.

So you know, a nice, you know, a positive

spin on the accreditation system and the regulatory

framework that currently exists, is that it has

worked to ensure that opportunities exist in the

institutions, so students can indeed learn there.

But it has not worked to ensure that students will

learn there.

You know, my strong belief is that greater

regulation from the federal level is not going to

ensure that students will learn in any way.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: I'd like to follow up on that just briefly. You mentioned you think really the accrediting agencies ought to be changing the environment, not from this, if I'm recalling what you said correctly, not directed to by the federal or state governments, but that they should on their own undertake this.

How would you see that happening, and what type of change would you recommend that they undertake, even if not inspired by a directive from an oversight agency?

DR. ARUM: Well you know, interestingly, you know, the accreditors on their own, many of them, most of them have been encouraging students to do self-assessment exercise, to measure learning outcomes and so on. So you know, it's not that these folks don't understand the problem. There's just no incentives in the organizational environment for what they do to matter very much.

There's huge incentives for organizations to do what a sociologists called symbolic compliance, right, symbolic compliance. You're able to address

the regulatory concerns, whether it's accreditation

or something else, you know, in symbolic ways that

satisfy the regulatory requirements, but in fact are

loosely coupled or not coupled at all with

organizational practices.

So again, you're not going to solve this,

I think, by organizational accreditation. You're

going to solve it by, you know, having actors within

the system take responsibility for this core mission

of colleges and universities, the mission that

colleges and universities were primarily established

for in the first place in this country, the mission

that faculty and administrators often got into this

business to accomplish as well.

You know, we need a national discourse to

have actors get back in touch with those core values

and that core mission of these institutions.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Other commentators

mentioned that they felt that the accreditation

process does drive institutions, does drive their

behavior, does drive what they measure, what they

value, and you're suggesting, I think, that the

federal government plays no role in that.

But why, I guess I would ask that question again. Why wouldn't the way that the federal government approves accrediting agencies and the standards they expect them to adhere to, why wouldn't that process then inspire a different accreditation process that institutions would pay attention to? Why were we left with the conclusion that we need to just wait and hope for the best?

DR. ARUM: Well again, I'm not sure that the accreditation problem itself is at fault here. They are often asking institutions to do the right things, to design programs that self-assess program quality, design plans to improve instruction, to measure learning outcomes.

However, there's no -- if the rest of the organizational incentives in the environment are to have the college and university administrators focus on everything else, and for faculty to focus on everything else, why would you think that this accreditation exercise would accomplish the goals that it intends.

Or, you know, why would you think that strengthening it in and of itself is going to create different outcomes?

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Thank you. Anne.

COMMITTEE MEMBER NEAL: I also want to join in thanks to you and your co-author for this report. It has given many of us some information that we have not been always able to get from the institutions themselves, and we thank you for doing that.

I wanted to find out, are all of the institutions about which you report, are they all accredited?

DR. ARUM: They are accredited.

COMMITTEE MEMBER NEAL: And let me ask you this. In talking about the misalignment of organizational incentives, in order to focus on the core mission, education and student learning, and undergraduate educational excellence. You mentioned trustees as being a potential lever for change.

Now my organization is called the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, so you can imagine

that's music to my ears.

I want to raise a question, however, in the context of the existing accreditation system, because I wonder if in fact the accreditation system as it is now placed, is misaligning organizational incentives so that when trustees and others attempt to make changes, that the accreditors themselves push back.

I just have, for your comments, a case of the South Dakota Board of Regents, in their effort to improve curriculum, review changes and address individual student needs. It was their determination that they wanted to put into place the CAAP test, because they were fearing that the kids were not writing properly and that they really needed to find how they were doing and improve that.

When in the fact the South Dakota Board of Regents undertook this effort, what was the accreditors' response? The accreditors response was basically to say trustees hands off here; this is really for the faculty. You haven't included them. How shameful for you to be concerned about accountability.

I'm fearful there may be some existing
disincentives within the accreditation system to
other bodies legally authorized to receive these
institutions, to actually make changes.

DR. ARUM: Well, those are interesting
observations, Ms. Neal. I am not an expert on
accreditation processes, and so I certainly would
believe that there are problems such as the ones you
identified, but I have no expertise in kind of
speaking to them.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Susan.

COMMITTEE MEMBER PHILLIPS: I wanted to
shift gears a little bit. There was definitely a
theme of more research is needed in your voices, and
if you were to design a federally-sponsored or
otherwise sponsored research program, portfolio that
you think would guide what you see as wrong, what
would it be called? What would it include? What
would it prioritize?

DR. ARUM: Great. Thank you very much.
So the study that we did on the side, with private
foundation money and the help of collaborating

institutions that opened up their doors to, with

student consent, allow us to do this research, for

that to have had to happen, for this book to have

gotten written, is a shame.

In K-12 education, for decades since at

least 1980, the federal government has been engaged

in creating national probability surveys, national

probability samples, where they follow kids over time

with repeated measures of standardized assessments,

with survey data, with collections of transcripts, so

that the social science research community can do

basic research to understand the determinants of

learning, both at the individual and the

institutional level.

It is a shame and I would say more a

disgrace that our country has not put in place, that

the federal government has not put in place similar

resources, data resources for the larger social

science Research community to address this problem,

so that we could answer questions like do resources

matter? Do resource allocations within schools

matter for learning? To what extent does student,

the characteristics of students play into this? What about institutional type?

How is it in 2011 that we cannot answer those basic questions? We have been answering those questions in K-12 education for decades. Now I did this study, the academically adrift, not because I had any axe to grind with higher education, not because I had a working hypothesis that there was limited learning on colleges campuses; simply because the opportunity arose to do basic social science research that had gone on in K-12 education for decades.

So I organized and conducted that study to look for the determinants of learning, and when the data came back, it shocked and surprised us the large number of kids that were moving through colleges and universities, with little asked of them, with applying themselves at such little rate; with getting such high grades and not surprisingly not demonstrating any learning.

So that's the kind of basic research infrastructure. I would suggest a national

probability survey like that's gone on in K-12

education, high school and beyond 1980, the National

Educational Longitudinal study 1992, and ELLS in 2000

and so on and so on.

We need something like that in higher

education, so that Arum and Roksa won't have to be

doing this work and having their neck out on the

table here. This should be all social science

researchers having access to this data to advance the

state of knowledge about learning in higher

education.

Now that's first and foremost what I would

suggest about research infrastructure. But also

there's debate and disagreement over the measures of

learning. People don't like the College Learning

Assessment. All measures are imperfect and limited,

including the Collegiate Learning Assessment. We say

that very clearly in the book. They don't like CAAP,

they don't like MAAP. What are the subject -- they

say there should be subject-specific knowledge

measured.

Well, let's design those instruments so

that we can follow kids over time with agreed-upon

measures to do the basic work that we need to do.

That is not a function that an individual researcher

can play. That is the function that the Federal

government needs to organize for us to do our work.

        For us, I mean the social science research

community, and for us I mean the field of higher

education that wants to measure and monitor whether

or not the students are learning anything.

        MS. WELLS-DOLAN: May I add that, you

know, for a lot of us, the research occurs on the

local level, in the production of students in courses

and dissertations, etcetera, and the rigor that

Richard has been able to establish this study is

challenged. I mean certainly in the higher education

research community, a lot of our research happens

within colleges and universities, and we want to know

very much about what is happening in institutions.

        There are basic problems with people at

institutions getting institutional data. A lot of

data sometimes can be seen as, you know, the property

of the institution. So it's hard to get that out

because, you know, if people were going to be critical.

Then also even making a connection between state departments of education and schools of education. So that transparency with the data that is being collected, improvements in that, could really help. But you asked about a program agenda, what would that look like, and I think that there are simple questions that people want to ask around, you know, on the local level how can we improve learning at our institution?

The quality enhancement process identified for us create an institutional conversation, which we learned that many students go to college for other reasons than learning. It's like you buy cars for other reasons than getting somewhere. There's all kinds of status or symbology around that. People buy different things for different uses.

Folks like athletic experiences, for example. Students like athletic experiences. There's all that, the extra curriculum. So I agree that this focus on that core has to be something that

our regional accreditation bodies can help

institutions with, because on their own, institution

processes can maybe sometimes spiral away from, and

that's some of the explosion in the growth of

administration that, you know, could be a problem.

      To me sometimes, an interesting measure

would be sort of like for philanthropy. How much

money are you spending to raise a dollar? How much

is the cost of the administration of the institution,

and how much is it costing to produce what we're

doing?

      So keeping check on administrative costs

and what's happening in that side, I think that's the

role of trustees and boards could help us

tremendously with.

      CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Further questions? Oh,

I'm sorry. Go ahead.

      DR. PRYOR: I'll just be brief. I agree

with the other panelists. I think what we really

need, as I said in my statement, is that we need more

longitudinal research with much, a wide variety of

measures, looking for newer measures.

The things that are really interesting about Richard's work are, you know, a lot of what he talked about. But I think there are also ways to expand upon that. You know, the findings that he has about student-faculty interaction and student studying are different from what we've seen over a number of decades in our research.

So you know, I think that if we combine a number of these projects, that's the way we're going to learn. But if the institutional resources are going towards having to, those two types of activities that I talked about, the ceaseless rankings issues, and gathering all of the same data all the time for accreditation, the none of these schools are going to have the ability to cooperate with anybody at a larger level, doing inter-institutional research.

DR. ARUM: Can I add one more thing here? So the other thing I want to put on the table around the research thing is a role for place randomized field trials.

So one of the things that people have

objected to our book is this finding that students,
when they study in groups, is associated not with
improvement on this measure but actual deterioration.

That's not a finding, you know, again I
was seeking, I'm a progressive educator. I have a
degree in teaching and curriculum and worked in urban
public schools for several years. So that wasn't a
finding I wanted, but that's what the data indicates.

Now what that suggests to me is that we
need some of these kind of collaborative learning
curriculum that people are so excited about. We need
to subject those to place randomized field trials,
where you introduce them randomly to some settings
over time. You track students over time and you
assess scientifically whether or not they're
associated with improvements in student outcomes.

That's what we do in medicine. We're
spending all this money in higher education. Isn't
it worth investing a little bit of money in kind of
some place randomized field research, so that we can
figure out which of these learning interventions work
and which don't work?

COMMITTEE MEMBER ROTHKOPF: If I might

just give a little historical context to your

excellent suggestion. I was a member of the

Commission known as the Commission in the Future of

Higher Education in 2006, appointed by the then-

Secretary.

Among the recommendations, which were

endorsed by 18 of the 19 members, was the kind of --

we go ahead and get the exact kind of information

you're talking about, tracking students through the

system, far more data so that the kind of work that

you're talking about that is now available in K-12

would be available in higher education.

Unfortunately, the higher education

community somehow didn't find, didn't really want to

do that, and they went to the Congress and Congress

did not approve it. But all I'm saying is I think

there's a history there. I think, I happen to

believe that what you're suggesting is right, and

that the higher education community should reconsider

its views in this matter, so that we do have the

data, so we do really know what student outcomes are.

We talk a lot about it, and you've really put your finger on it in your book, and there's a whole lot more to be done with the right tools. So thank you.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Yes, Jamie.

COMMITTEE MEMBER STUDLEY: Just following on that point, there's a lot of discussion of longitudinal data systems at the state level for P-12, and I wonder whether your recommendation would incorporate linking to those, so that you can follow the same people all the way through, because having worked in both systems, it seems to me you might agree that they are connected and you want to be able to follow people on all of those determinants. Is that a correct assumption?

DR. ARUM: Absolutely. You know, P-16 data sets at the state level, there's been some initiatives in that direction. They're certainly sensible. But most of those data sets are set up for administrative purposes, which are worthy and the state certainly has a right and an interest in developing.

However, what I'm talking about is something, you know, a little bit different, in the sense that you are able to identify a random sample of these individuals and track them with more detailed questions about their college experiences, their academic backgrounds, their orientations, their behaviors, their aspirations, looking at their transcript, looking at their courses.

That's the kind of basic research we're going to need to do to move the field forward. The P-16 data sets at the state level are absolutely necessary and warranted, but serve a different functions.

COMMITTEE MEMBER STUDLEY: So here's the question I wanted to ask. It seems that both you and Dr. Pryor were talking about focusing on the delta, the change, maybe all three of you.

You were speaking institutionally talking about not just getting somebody's numbers on whatever you decided was the right thing to be watching to determine outcome, but the change over time, the institutional delta trajectory.

Could you -- it does seem that so many institutions and what you are describing as the distorted priorities, focus on getting different people that the ones they are getting now, rather than educating even better the ones that they have. I wonder if that's -- am I hearing that correctly, and two, can you think of a way to use analysis of institutional change in some way that would nest appropriately with accreditation in a public fashion, because the last step is in a way that all the members of the consuming public could understand, not just we're at X and we're moving in this way from where we were. Does that hold promise? Maybe starting at this end for variety.

MS. WELLS-DOLAN: Yes, I do. Yes, how do, you know, in terms of institutional change over time, historians would be the ones that have focused on that. For example, the history of our University by Charles Eagles does a great job of describing that environment.

But you know internally, what I found is to even understand how we've tracked practices, those

systems have just, I mean have gotten in place since the 1980's, 90's. So the kind of data that we need over time, we've got to keep working at that.

What we have to do is probably more qualitative. I understand rigor and I'm not against that, but when you're on the ground looking at it, it's sort of, it's a more qualitative research idea. You're taking a number of data points and data supports you're planning, and you know, perspectives have to come into that, including we use, for example, CLA measures in thinking and MAAP, and we are trying to put that as a part of our plan.

So yes, we need to do that. We need guidance from the research community about how to do that on the local level, as well as more broadly.

DR. PRYOR: I think you're right. The institutional climate has a lot to do with what we're looking at. Where we get at that over time is through our faculty survey. So some of the most interesting research that we have at HARI is the recombined data from students, with the data that we have from faculty, where they're talking about the

kinds of goals that the faculty have in the

classroom, and we can compare that with the kinds of

goals that the students are achieving over time.

I think the other part of your question

was getting at not just looking at the traditional

four-year student, but the fact that you have

transfer students that are coming into the

institution.

How does that change the mix? How does

that impact the ability of the institution to look at

that change over time? Certainly, that's the

direction that is not always looked at in the

research right now.

That's an area that we're trying to get

into, but it's not something we've done a lot of work

at recently.

CHAIRMAN STAPLES: Any further questions?

Art, you have your light on. Are you still asking

questions? I want to make sure I don't -- okay.

Thank you very much for your presentations. It was

very enlightening. I appreciate it.

We're going to take a brief ten minute

break for people to get lunch who aren't being

provided lunch, and for those of us here to get our

lunch, and then we'll start our lunch time panel

discussion.   Thank you.