**Appendix C: Lines of Inquiry for Student Focus Groups**

Below are three lines of inquiry that RTI recommends be used in the campus focus groups. The proposed questions are for youth, but many of them could be adapted for other stakeholders as well. These questions are informed by data drawn from the Cal-Pass Plus System in February 2014 for select campuses. In addition to these suggested three lines of inquiry, each campus may have particular challenges or opportunities, suggested in your data or from other sources that you want to pursue in your student focus group. We suggest preparing up to two campus-specific lines of inquiry in addition to the three suggested below for all campuses. The John Burton Foundation technical assistance advisors can provide assistance with identifying the most salient questions for your campus.

**The interview questions are shown in grey text boxes. We suggest you move the interview questions, including the campus-specific questions you develop, into Appendix A, which also has introductory, warm-up and closing language you can use for the focus group.**

Line of Inquiry #1: Factors That Influence a Foster Youth’s Enrollment Experience

(Note: There may be transfer students in the focus groups, particularly at the CSUs and UCs. Hearing about the path of these students, even though they did not start at your college, may be valuable nevertheless).

*This first set of questions is intended to help us better understand what factors influence a foster youth’s ability to successfully enroll in college.*

[Warm Up Questions]

1. *Can you tell us about your path from high school to college? For example, how long after high school graduation did you enroll in college?*

[Probe for:]

* *If more than a year, why did you wait to enroll?*
* *If within 1 year, what helped you to enroll in college so soon after high school graduation?*

[Targeted Questions]

1. *Describe your transition from high school to college. Was it predominantly positive, difficult, confusing, etc.?*
2. *Reflecting on this experience, what made it that way?*
3. *What more can our campus, or high schools, do to make the transition to college very smooth for foster youth?*

Line of Inquiry #2: Factors That Influence a Foster Youth’s College Completion

(Note: These youth have not yet completed college, so we are suggesting that you ask about factor that are helping and hindering them achieving their educational goals)

*This next set of questions is intended to help us better understand what factors influence a foster youth’s ability to achieve their educational goals.*

[Warm Up Questions]

1. C*an you tell us about your educational goals? For example, do you want to complete an AA, a certificate, a Bachelor’s degree, a law degree, or some other graduate degree?*

[Targeted Questions]

1. *Please describe what factors are influencing how you are able to achieve your educational goals. Since there might many factors, let’s first talk about things our campus is doing, or could do, to help you achieve your educational goals.*

[Probe for:]

* *Financial aid:* 
  + - *What about the process of learning about, applying for, and receiving financial aid. Was it predominantly positive, difficult, confusing, etc.?*
    - *Reflecting on this experience, what made it that way?*
    - *What more do you think our college can do to help foster youth with the financial aid process?*
    - *Experience with college courses:*
    - *Do you feel that you have been given the supports and tools that you need to succeed in your courses? What tools and supports have been predominantly positive, difficult, confusing, etc.?*
    - *What more do you think our college can do to help foster youth succeed in their classes?*
    - *What other things on our campus are influencing your ability to achieve your educational goals?*

1. *Now let’s talk about things off campus that might be influencing your ability to achieve your educational goals.*

[Probe for:]

* *What about child care needs?*
* *What about housing needs?*
* *Other things?*

Line of Inquiry #3: How to Identify Foster Youth on Our Campus

*This next set of questions is intended to help us better understand how our campus can best know who the foster youth are on campus, so we can best support you.*

[Warm Up Questions]

*1. To what extent do you identify as a foster youth, or a former foster youth? Is it important to you that people on this campus know about that part of your background, or important to you that they don’t know about it?*

[Probe for:]

* *Are there some groups of people you do want to know, and others you don’t? For example, do you feel differently about your classmates knowing compared with the school administration knowing?*

[Targeted Questions]

1. *Do you remember if there was any form you filled out as you were applying to this campus, or for financial aid, that asked you if you were a foster youth?*

* *Did you have to provide verification documentation? If so, what? Was this documentation easy to obtain? How did they obtain it?*

1. *Is there any other way you used to let the campus know you are a foster youth?*
2. *If you haven’t let the campus know you are foster youth, why not?*
3. *If you have let the campus know that you are foster youth, was that experience predominantly positive, difficult, confusing, etc.?*
4. *Reflecting on this experience, what made it that way?*