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Good morning. Thank you for the invitation to talk with you today. I arrive with more questions than answers but with gratitude for the opportunity to engage in this conversation and to raise important questions about a 90-credit bachelor's degree pathway.

A shift such as the one we are discussing today requires innovative and thoughtful conversations and planning. A parallel example is how our institution and our state-related peers approached the early conversations around performance-based funding. We looked at funding models in other states. We looked at what worked well in terms of positive impact and the challenges institutions faced in transitioning to a new funding model. Consideration of a 90-credit degree pathway requires thoughtful exploration and lends itself to the same intentionality.

Since our founding, access to excellence has been Temple's guiding mission. With that in mind, we are always willing to participate in conversations around helping students earn degrees faster, reducing the costs of a college degree and enabling students to enter the workforce sooner, particularly in high demand fields. We also recognize that students and their families want options and flexibility when thinking about college. We want to best serve the students of the Commonwealth and those seeking to come to Pennsylvania to earn a college degree.

We have started watching which states passed legislation allowing or requiring 90-credit bachelor's degree pathways and how they are implementing these programs. States and institutions are taking different approaches, and we will want to understand the benefits and drawbacks of each of those options.

It is important to learn more from our peer institutions, as to how faculty at campuses offering 90-credit degrees developed high-quality programs that are preparing students for work or further study. How did they successfully ensure that such pathways are not a "less than" or "degree-light?" In the available literature it has been noted that this pathway may not work in all subject areas. A 90-credit degree is a *degree-type* and not a prototype for all degrees or disciplines.

As I noted at the opening of my remarks, there are critical questions to explore:

- How did institutions preserve the most important aspects of their degree programs?
- How did faculty at these institutions determine for which disciplines a 90-credit pathway could be effective?
- Who are these programs serving and are they serving new audiences of students who might have not pursued or completed a post-secondary degree otherwise?
- How did this new pathway impact student debt or borrowing behavior?
- How do institutions balance academic quality and the integrity of a degree with the need to prepare students to enter fields with critical workforce demand?
- How do students move between 90 and 120 credit degree programs, if at all?
- Another important question is: “will 90 credit degrees lead to gains in retention and graduation rates?” Do we see data in other states that support that hypothesis?

As the number of states approving 90-credit degrees increases and as more institutions develop such offerings, it is important that we provide our faculty with the opportunity to conceptualize 90-credit degrees as new and comprehensive academic programs, intentionally and thoughtfully designed.

My area is assessment and institutional effectiveness. When I think of academic programs, my first thoughts are not of credit hours or seat time; I focus on learning outcomes. When faculty are developing programs and curricula the focus should be on what students should know and do when they graduate with a degree in X. The conversation around 90-credit degrees allows us to think about outcomes from a slightly different lens --*what does the curriculum to gain these skills and knowledge look like and can that be accomplished in a less traditional time frame?*

We very much want to participate in exploring, with our academic programs, the answers to these questions. Temple is an urban, public research university. Access and affordability are at the center of our mission. We remain open to learning more and considering alternative pathways that allow students to access higher education, reduce the cost of their degrees, and enter the workforce well prepared.

Thank you.