INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR:
EVALUATION STUDY OF KSU’S QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN, IT’S ABOUT ENGAGEMENT

A. INTRODUCTION: You are being invited to voluntarily participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Ann M. Bennett, Assistant Professor of Educational Research in the Department of Secondary & Middle Grades Education at Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to participate in this study, you should read this consent document and ask any questions that you may have regarding the study or anything that you may not understand.

B. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The purpose of this study is to evaluate KSU’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), It’s About Engagement. The QEP was instituted in the Fall of 2019 as a large implementation of a pilot. The actual start date of QEP implementation is the Fall of 2020. The intention of the QEP is to ensure the highest level of success for KSU’s students by creating courses with an engaged learning component, specifically internships, undergraduate research, and service-learning. Courses that include an engaged learning component allow students to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to real world activities. An evaluation of this initiative is necessary for three reasons: 1) As the initiative moves out of its pilot stage and into its full implementation, data is needed on outcomes of the pilot and required process improvements; 2) During full implementation, data needs to continue to be collected on outcomes and process improvements; and 3) the QEP is part of KSU’s reaffirmation of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation.

C. PROJECT PROCEDURE AND TIME REQUIRED: Your involvement in the study includes a 60- to 90-minute focus group or interview under the following conditions:
1. The Institutional Review Board of Kennesaw State University has approved the study.
2. Each participant will have a one focus group or interview with the Principal Investigator, Dr. Ann M. Bennett. The focus group or interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for both Dr. Bennett and the participant, and it will be conducted in an available and convenient location that is both confidential and private. This location may include a virtual environment through Microsoft Teams.
3. The focus group or interview’s emphasis will be on general questions regarding their perceptions of and experiences with the QEP, perceptions of and experiences with engaged learning courses, student learning outcomes, support & implementation of the QEP, and the QEP Steering Committee.
4. Dr. Bennett will conduct and audio record the focus group or interview.
5. Dr. Bennett will obtain and securely store the audio recording and transcription of the focus group or interview.
6. All recordings and transcripts become property of Dr. Bennett.

D. RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS: There is minimal risk to your participation in this study. The Principal Investigator foresees no physical, psychological, legal, or social risk associated with your participation in this study. Participation should involve no discomfort, and no sensitive topics will be discussed. The minimal risk posed to you through your participation is a possible breach of confidentiality, and measures have already been taken to ensure that confidentiality will be maintained to the best of my ability (see Confidentiality below).

E. BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits to participants, but potential benefits may include an increased understanding of the QEP and engaged learning courses, as well having identified processes for improvement of the QEP.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality of the focus group or interview will be maintained to the best of my ability. Audio recordings and transcripts will be collected and stored on a password protected external hard drive. Once the focus group or interview has been transcribed, the files will be destroyed. Notes will be made during the focus group or interview, but they will not be associated with specific individuals, but, instead, pseudonyms will be used. Please note that I cannot promise that other members of the focus group will not share the information that you discuss during the focus group. Data will be stored securely in my office (see Contact Information below) and only made available to me.
G. PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study, at any time, without penalty and without loss of benefits to which are otherwise entitled. Additionally, there is no compensation for participation.

H. INCLUSION CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION: This study will use purposeful sampling to recruit voluntary participants who have or are currently engaged with implementation of KSU’s QEP. “Engaged” is defined as those individuals or units who provide resources or support for the QEP, those who oversee its implementation at the university, college, or departmental level, designers and instructors of engaged learning courses, and students who are or have been enrolled in an engaged learning course. Participants will be sought from the eleven (11) KSU colleges that participate in the QEP (Bagwell College of Education, Coles College of Business, College of Architecture and Construction Management, College of the Arts, College of Computing and Software Engineering, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Science and Mathematics, Honors College, Southern Polytechnic College of Engineering & Engineering Technology, University College, WellStar College of Health and Human Services). Additionally, participants will also be a part of one of six focus group categories (College Deans, QEP Liaisons, Department Chairs, faculty, students, and the QEP Steering Committee).

I. USE OF ONLINE PARTICIPANT SCREENER: A participant screener will be used in order to determine in which focus groups participants should be placed. Only basic data related to your involvement with KSU and the QEP, as well as availability for focus groups or interviews, will be collected. Additionally, consent will be obtained using the online participant screener. Data collected online will be handled in a confidential manner (identifiers will be used), but Internet Protocol addresses WILL NOT be collected by the survey program.

J. CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, or if you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Ann M. Bennett.

Dr. Ann M. Bennett  
Assistant Professor of Educational Research  
Department of Secondary & Middle Grades Education  
Kennesaw State University  
580 Parliament Garden Way NW, MD 0122  
Bagwell Education Building 348  
Kennesaw, GA 30144  
470.578.2249  
abenne92@kennesaw.edu

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to:

Institutional Review Board  
Kennesaw State University  
585 Cobb Avenue, MD 0111  
Kennesaw Hall 3417  
Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591  
470.578.6407.

PLEASE PRINT A COPY OF THIS CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE PRINT CAPABILITIES, YOU MAY CONTACT THE RESEARCHER TO OBTAIN A COPY.
CONSENT

I have read the above information, and I agree and give my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

________________________________________________ _______________________
Signature of Participant or Authorized Representative Date

________________________________________________
Printed Name of Participant

________________________________________________ _______________________
Signature of Principal Investigator Date
(Ann M. Bennett)

PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS.