

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

CONSENT LETTER

RAPID: Using SenseMaker® to Investigate Complex Dynamics in Social Systems to Inform Agile, Real-Time Policy-Responses in Times of Crisis

Dear Participant,

My name is Dr. Nicola Sochacka and I am a faculty member in the College of Engineering at the University of Georgia. I'm working with three colleagues, Drs. John Morelock, Racheida Lewis, and Joachim Walther, and a team of undergraduate research students, to better understand how faculty, staff, and students in our college are experiencing the COVID-19 crisis and transition to online learning. I am inviting you to take part in this research project.

From April to December 2020, the short-term goal of this project is to use a novel research approach called SenseMaker® to collect short micro-narratives of faculty, staff, and student experiences. My team and I will examine these narratives, and your responses to the questions we ask you about them, to inform real-time actions to improve the teaching and learning experiences, and general well-being of students, faculty, and staff in our college. The long-term goal of this project is to investigate what organizational structures and cultures contribute to resilient educational ecosystems, and how these structures and cultures can be fostered outside of times of crisis to better prepare STEM programs for future disruptions.

I am asking you to participate because you are currently a faculty or staff member, or undergraduate or graduate student in engineering at UGA.

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to write a brief story about a recent experience you have had as an engineering student, faculty, or staff member at UGA. You will then be asked to answer several questions about that story (telling your story and answering the questions should take between 10 and 15 minutes). Your answers to the questions you are asked about your story will be combined with your peers' responses to make up the statistical data for this study. The study findings will be summarized into a series of short, regular reports that will be shared with all participants in the study. As a research team, we are committed to the transparency of our work.

Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. If you are a student, your decision about whether or not to participate will have no bearing on your grades or class standing. If you are a faculty or staff member, your decision about whether or not to participate will have no bearing on your employment.

For some participants, writing about their experience may cause some discomfort. If this happens to you, you may wish to contact UGA-Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) at (706) 542-2273. You may also skip survey questions if you do not wish to answer them.

Through participating in this study, you will have the following benefits: exposure to a new research approach that may be of interest to your professional development, and a series of summary reports of the study findings.

This study uses [Cognitive Edge's SenseMaker®](#) platform to securely and confidentially collect first-person narrative accounts of experiences and perceptions of studying engineering. The SenseMaker platform will remove any identifying information from participant responses, such as IP addresses, before releasing the data to the research team at UGA. We note, however, that because this research involves the transmission of

data over the Internet, while we have taken every reasonable effort to ensure the effective use of available technology; confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

It is possible that the information gained from this study will be shared in the form of academic publications or presentations without additional consent. It is also possible that the information gained from this study will be shared with other researchers to design a larger, cross-institutional study with other universities across the United States.

This study is funded by the National Science Foundation (Project #2028452).

If you are interested in participating or have questions about this research, please feel free to contact me at (706) 542-4729, sochacka@uga.edu. If you have any complaints or questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the IRB at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.

Please keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Nicola Sochacka