**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER**

**PROJECT TITLE:** **A values-framework and self-assessment tool to improve tertiary academic leadership**

**APPLICATION NUMBER: (2020- 18E)**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: A/Prof Duncan Nulty  
STUDENT RESEARCHER: NA**

**STUDENT’S DEGREE: NA**

**PROJECT FUNDING: The Council of Australasian University Leaders of Learning and Teaching plus ‘in-kind’ support from Australian Catholic University.**

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below through which we hope to improve leadership in higher education by helping leaders to be more consciously informed by values.

***What is the project about?***

This project investigates the values that inform decision making for Australian leaders in university learning and teaching. Considerable scholarly and research evidence, plus evidence from our daily experience, strongly suggests it is not only desirable for us to integrate values into our practice decisions, it is necessary. Through your participation in two survey iterations, this project will develop a bank of relevant higher education scenarios and solutions to inform creation of a self-assessment tool for higher education practitioners to guide their awareness of and commitment to personal values as they inform professional decisions.

This project provides two anonymous, online surveys to leaders in university learning and teaching. **Survey One** to be implemented in June of 2020, seeks short (under one page), written descriptions of one or more anonymous/fictional scenarios that you have encountered (or can imagine encountering) in your professional practice as leaders in university learning and teaching. This scenario will require an action/response that is informed/mitigated by values. You will also be asked to identify a number of values (three to five) that you believe are central to responding satisfactorily to the ethical issues embedded in the scenario.

These scenarios and associated values from Survey One will be reviewed by the researchers and categorised according to shared/overlapping or unique features, themes and issues. A reduced series of aggregate scenarios will be developed from this collection of scenarios to reflect the range of key issues and associated values identified by you as important to your practice and to inform the next survey as well as the eventual self-assessment tool. **Survey Two** will be distributed to you in the third quarter of 2020. This survey will present the aggregate scenarios developed from Survey One and elicit a description of your suitable/preferred response as well as identification of the dominant values informing this response. This data will also then be analysed to inform the development of the self-assessment tool.

***Who is undertaking the project?***

This project is being conducted by Associate Professor Duncan Nulty and Dr Alison Owens at Australian Catholic University. A/Prof Nulty is the Manager of Academic Development at Australian Catholic University. He has completed multiple research projects, with a particular focus on the assessment of students’ learning, and published several highly cited scholarly papers on a range of issues in higher education. Dr Owens has completed two PhDs and multiple research projects investigating a range of issues in higher education. She has published widely in scholarly publications.

***Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?***

As both surveys are anonymous, it will not be possible to link survey responses to individuals, however, the commitment of time required for each survey (approximately 10-30 minutes total) will be minor inconvenience. It is possible some of the scenarios may cause minor discomfort to participants as they address ethical decision-making.

***What will I be asked to do?***

* Write one or more descriptions of professional scenarios that require consideration of personal values to resolve.
* Describe what you consider to be an appropriate action/response that is informed/mitigated by values.
* Nominate the key values you believe are embedded in the response.
* Write a response/decision to a range of scenarios provided to you and identify the key values justifying the response.

***How much time will the project take?***

Survey One should take approximately ten to twenty minutes, although this does depend on the detail and complexity of the scenario you provide to us. We welcome the richness, but also value your time.

Survey Two should take approximately 20 minutes.

***What are the benefits of the research project?***

The benefits for you in writing and responding to scenarios include raised awareness of possible scenarios in higher education that require values-based responses as well as more developed understanding of the most relevant values applied in higher education decisions. You will also share in the broad experience and expertise of CAULLT members in this domain by reading collated scenarios. Ultimately, you will be provided with access to the self-assessment tool to promote your own personal commitment to values relevant in higher education practice.

***Can I withdraw from the study?***

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate. If you agree to participate, you will be assumed to have given your consent for the data you provide in the surveys to be used for the assessment and research purposes described above. It will not be possible to withdraw your data after you have completed the survey due to the anonymity of survey feedback. However, you may choose to withdraw from either survey, at any time, without providing a reason and with no penalty. You may also choose not to complete the self-assessment tool that develops from this research.

***Will anyone else know the results of the project?***

As the research involves two anonymous surveys of CAULTT members, it will only be possible to identify the data as originating from members of CAULLT collectively. Our practice of using multiple scenarios to create aggregate scenarios will add further de-identification. It will not be possible to link individuals with specific data. There are approximately 98 profiles of CAULLT members on its website.

***Will I be able to find out the results of the project?***

You will receive access to the self-assessment tool that develops from this survey and will be informed when a publication reporting on the research becomes available.

***Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?***

You may contact Associate Professor Duncan Nulty ([duncan.nulty@acu.edu.au](mailto:duncan.nulty@acu.edu.au)) with any questions about this research.

***What if I have a complaint or any concerns?***

The study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (review number 2020-XXX). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Manager of the Human Research Ethics and Integrity Committee care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Manager, Ethics and Integrity

c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

Australian Catholic University

North Sydney Campus

PO Box 968

NORTH SYDNEY, NSW 2059

Ph.: 02 9739 2519

Fax: 02 9739 2870

Email: [resethics.manager@acu.edu.au](mailto:resethics.manager@acu.edu.au)

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

***I want to participate! How do I sign up?***

As a CALLT member, you will receive an invitation to complete Survey One by email. You will be emailed a second invitation to complete Survey Two by email once the analysis of Survey One results is completed.

Yours sincerely,

**A/ Prof Duncan Nulty**

**Dr Alison Owens**