**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**2021**

**Study Title:** An Exploration of the Relationship between Organizational and Interpersonal Communication on Upcoming Retirees' Social Retirement Anxiety

**Principle Investigator:** Nici Ploeger-Lyons, Ph.D.; Associate Professor in the Department of Business Communication; University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire; 715-836-2488; ploegern@uwec.edu

**Introduction:** You have been invited to participate in this research study conducted by Dr. Nici Ploeger-Lyons from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, as you have been identified as **a full-time employee who may be nearing retirement from your organization**. The following text serves as a detailed overview of this research study. Dr. Ploeger-Lyons invites you to contact her with questions about the study or your participation in the study. **Your participation in this study is voluntary.**

**Purpose of the Research:** Current statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that approximately one quarter of the workforce will be planning their retirement within the next 10 to 15 years. While there is a growing body of literature on retirement from a financial planning perspective, organizational and interpersonal communication studies about retirement are less common. The aim of this research study is to increase understanding of the relationship between workplace and interpersonal communication and the experience of the retirement process, particularly in terms of the social components of retirement (e.g., messages, meaning, relationships, identity).

**Potential Benefits:** Your participation in this study will contribute to greater scholarly knowledge about the social and communicative aspects of retirement, and may generate important practical recommendations for upcoming retirees, recently-retired individuals, and other individuals in retirees’ networks (e.g., family members, remaining coworkers, organizations at large).

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:** You have been identified as a potential participant for this study, as you are someone who may be approaching retirement.

In order to participate in this study, you must:

* self-identify as a full-time employee (over the age of 18), **and**
* self-identify as an upcoming retiree, who is anticipating retirement from your organization within the next few years.

Participants will be excluded if they do not meet the above two criteria; no other disqualifiers are anticipated.

**Research Procedures:** Your voluntary participation in this study consists of completing one online survey, which consists of a series of questions about your relationship with your organization and your profession, your communication satisfaction with coworkers and (if applicable) with your significant other, and your feelings about your upcoming retirement. You will be asked relevant demographic questions like age, length of time with your organization, and months until your anticipated retirement. You will also be presented with two open-ended questions where you will be asked to tell the stories of memorable conversations you have had about retirement with a coworker and (if applicable) a significant other. It is anticipated that your participation will take approximately 20-25 minutes.

You may discontinue your participation at any time, without penalty.

**Possible Risks:** No more than minimal risk is anticipated in this research study, meaning that risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine psychological examinations or tests. However, some participants may experience anxiety when answering questions about the life change of retirement. Participants experiencing anxiety may benefit from resources like MentalHealth.gov, which provides information and hotlines for getting mental health help. Should you experience significant distress during your participation in this study (or afterward), please contact your primary care provider immediately.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** The Qualtrics survey is housed on the researcher’s password-protected, duo-security Qualtrics account. All electronic information generated as part of this study will be stored in a locked file on the researcher’s password-protected, university computer, and will be deleted after the study results are reported.

The survey has been set up so that participation is anonymized; no direct-identifiers from any participant will be obtained. Further, you will not be asked anywhere in the survey to share your name, the name of any other individuals, or the name of your organization. Should you share specific names in open-ended responses, they will be replaced with pseudonyms if the researcher includes an excerpt from your open-ended responses when reporting the study results. Other than the open-ended responses, all data will be reported in the aggregate form, and will not be tied to any one individual.

**Contact Information:**

Questions about the research study can be directed to:

Dr. Nici Ploeger-Lyons

Associate Professor

Department of Business Communication  
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

715-836-2488 (office)

ploegern@uwec.edu

This research study, including this informed consent form, has been reviewed and approved by the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Proposal ID: xxxxx pending xxxxx). This board ensures that research studies involving human participants are ethical and follow appropriate federal and state regulations. Any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research should be directed to:

Dr. Michael Axelrod

Committee Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire

715-836-5020

axelromi@uwec.edu

By proceeding with this survey, you are agreeing to participate in this research study and to have your data reported in the study results. You acknowledge understanding the research study’s procedures, what will be asked of you as a result of participation, and the potential risks. You understand that participation is voluntary and is not a requirement of receiving benefits or services from UWEC. You understand that you may withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty.

<YES, I consent to participate. Clicking this option will direct you to the survey.>

<NO, I do not consent to participate. Clicking this option will direct you to the UWEC Business Communication homepage.>