Dear Prospective Participant:

The following is an invitation to participate in a study with working title:

**Battling dual acceptance? Students’ perceptions of power, positionality, and process in an Educational Ph.D. Cohort Program**

Students often have intrinsic feelings as to whether or not they are *worthy* to be a part of a doctoral cohort program. The notion and feelings of belonging or conversely, not belonging is evident in these discussions. In addition, there are certain inherent power play and positionality that students in cohorts display, often at the demise of other students, rendering feelings of powerlessness. Each cohort is ingrained with its own dynamics and in effect, the notions of race, gender, and other critical issues are subsumed in the negative dialecticdiscourses exhibited by some members of the group, while precluding others from feeling that they belong. Consequently, based on preliminary conversations with several students who have been through such programs, it is assumed that the “mind-set” students have about the reasons for their acceptance, and the way they are treated by their peers in such cohorts and or programs will have a positive or negative effect on their performance and ultimate success. This study sets out to attest or refute such assumptions. The study will be conducted by Dr. Sandria S. Stephenson, Ph.D., CPA as Principal Investigator (PI). The PI will obtain IRB approval prior to fully engaging in the study.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The risk of participating is minimal, and all identity will remain confidential; all possible identifiers: names and any other status will be replaced with pseudonyms. Please note that should you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to sign an IRB approved consent form and complete a questionnaire that addresses several open-ended, semi-structured questions related to the above assumptions. The results of the study are important and have implications for higher education graduate program administrators, current and prospective students, and program policy makers. The study will be disseminated in a written report format and also will be presented at a conference. Should you decide to participate, return a signed copy of this letter, in the envelope, to me by April 25th. Upon receipt of your signed copy, I will provide you with a copy of the official consent form and the questionnaire will be subsequently sent to you by email.

Thank you for considering participating in this study.

Dr. Sandria S. Stephenson

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ consent to participate in this study. Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

NAME:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ email contact\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_