**Robert Kennedy College**

**Professor Ricco’s Suggestions for Developing the Proposal**

**Updated February 2022**

* Follow the **word count and Turnitin match rate guidelines** of your university
* Seek to **focus the study as much as is practical**/**possible**….broad topics are very difficult to accomplish a study on.
* Use the resources available to you from your courses and residency. The RKC site’s “**Resource**s” tab has a great deal of useful information that you should already be familiar with.
* Consider drawing a graphic to help yourself reflect on and consider what really are the **core variables or factors that are to be in your study**. How do or might they interact with each other and are they dependent or independent variables? What will make your study unique (and possible fill a gap in the literature)? It is important to communicate these to the readers in order to provide structure to your study.
* Find and apply supporting citations and references throughout the proposal. You will likely have a page or so of references, which do not count toward your word count, yet also exclude them from your Turnitin match rate.
* **Do a large part of your Literature Review now**, so as to support the development of your proposal and to save time later. **Questions in surveys and interviews should be grounded in the literature.** Look at other studies with similar topics as yours…what did they do and how did they do it?

The suggested **Proposal** format follows (actually precedes and aligns with) that of the first 3 chapters of the dissertation, thus I recommend writing your Proposal using the following headings and subheadings for your topic content. Fit this content in according to the university’s proposal form or other guidelines they have provided to you, as applicable:

**Introduction and Background**

What are the core factors involved in this study, what is the background to the context of the study, and fundamentally what is this study about? Include several citations from the literature so as to also ground your study in the literature/theory. What theories or models from your coursework might apply to your study? (In essence, this is the beginning of your Literature Review).

**Problem Statement**

Seek to capture the core problem in one sentence, and then continue is supporting that with two or three paragraphs. Seek to roughly size the problem, ideally quantitative and sometimes also qualitatively. (what is the size of the industry in this selected market, for example…in annual revenue, units, etc.).

**Research Aim**

The Research Aim of this study is: (try to put it into one sentence and then support it with a paragraph.

**Research Objectives**

I suggest somewhere around 3 objectives….1 is too few, and 5 is too many. Break down the key components of your study this way.

**Research Questions**

Here again, around 3 or so more specific research questions should be developed. What is it that you are seeking to capture insights on in your study?

**Research Methodology**

1. **Research Design/Approach**- explain and support your overall research approach and why that is the best one for this study. (cite sources)
2. Data Collection - what is the population of this study, projected or targeted sample size; how will you collect the data; what is your selection process for participants
3. Data Analysis- how will you analyze the data.

**Ethics**

How will you exercise proper research ethics in your research process? (refer to the expectations of the university). How will you minimize bias of any kind? How will you protect the data collected?

**Limitations**

What limitations exist within the study? Is it generalizable or not? Other constraints? Include here the university’s time limitation in completing the study also.