Greetings from the Executive Director

Laura Knight Lynn, PhD
Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

If you are like me, you are finding it hard to believe that 2016 is almost over. We have had a very productive and successful year in the Center for Research Quality (CRQ), and are looking forward to 2017. Among our many initiatives and on-going programs in the coming year, I want to highlight some activities that relate directly to assuring student progress and success in their research training.

As you will see in our first article, I’m happy to welcome Lou Milanesi back to the CRQ to focus specifically on doctoral student progress and to lead efforts to intervene in those committees that are needing a little extra attention and support. Lou’s experience in student affairs and research quality management along with his strengths problem-solving and innovation make him a perfect leader to enhance our capacity in this area.

Also, coming up soon are the sessions that we are offering at winter faculty meeting, detailed in Deborah Inman’s article, one of which will focus specifically on supporting student progress in the capstone. Other articles in this newsletter focus on our existing programs and services, including updates on the advanced research courses and our support of data collection and analysis.

I specifically want to highlight Marydee Spillett’s article that provides some guidance for faculty members’ use of our methodology advising service. I also want to remind you of the weekly qualitative and quantitative office hours available to your student to support them with their methodology planning and analysis. The monthly schedule can be found here.

http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orqm/researchresources

Finally, because it is always good to share our hard work, be sure to read Kristina Harris’s article about her recent co-presentation on the DBA consulting capstone pilot at the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) Region 2 Conference. This poster is a great example of an innovative applied approach for a professional doctorate capstone. I’m so glad
we can add to thought leadership in the field as we offer new opportunities for doctoral student preparation.

We hope you enjoy this issue and please let us know your questions at CRQ@waldenu.edu.

Best,

Laura

Committee Support and Doctoral Student Progress
Lou Milanesi, PhD
Director, Committee Support & Doctoral Student Progress

At the end of 2016, I returned to the CRQ to serve in a new role as Director for Committee Support & Doctoral Student Progress. I feel that my recent service as Dean/Executive Director for Student Affairs and my earlier service as the Director of Research Quality Management have provide me with a unique understanding of the multifaceted dynamics that impact students’ experience in pursuing doctoral degrees.

This new position will include new assignments as well as some duties I previously supported within the CRQ, such as providing university level guidance related to the University Research Review (URR) process, supporting faculty serving in the URR role, and mediation of the URR Appeals Process. Additionally, I will now also focus on directly monitoring how students are progressing in their research, checking with committees to ascertain specific challenges they are encountering with advancing student progress, and providing assistance to resolve impasses in student progress wherever possible. To help facilitate progress for students in the final and most challenging stage of their doctoral education experience, I will be partnering with the Office of Student Research Administration team as well as college level program directors and research coordinators.

I look forward to working with many of you. Finally, if you have thoughts you would like to share, please contact me at louis.milanesi@waldenu.edu

Our Mission
The overarching mission of the Center for Research Quality is to align, maintain, integrate, and enrich those activities that contribute to the quality and productivity of Walden University research. Accordingly, its offices formulate, coordinate, and oversee the processes that support student research capstones as well as external research conducted under the auspices of the University.
At each faculty meeting, the CRQ provides some targeted programming to support the development of our students’ research skills and the research capacity of the faculty who work with them. In Orlando this January, we will offer the following programs, most of which will be reprised as webinars later in the year.

**Faculty Development Sessions**

**Accessing and Using Secondary Data**

Many students are unaware of the vast amount of existing data and its potential for use in doctoral capstone research. Moreover, with some Walden University doctoral programs requiring the use of secondary data analysis, and others using existing organizational data, many students have continued confusion about what existing data look like and what a secondary analysis entails. The purpose of this session is to present approaches to use secondary data, provide examples of existing data resources, and engage faculty mentoring doctoral students in a conversation about secondary data. Attendees will leave the session with language, approaches, and possible data sources to provide their students.

Panelists: Laura Lynn, Leilani Endicott, Matt Jones and Molly Lauck.

**Conducting Research at Walden - What and Who to Know**

Conducting research in the distributed environment of Walden University can sometimes be difficult. To help address this challenge, this high-level session will focus on where to find the support a faculty researcher may need. Panelists will discuss topics that include finding funding, getting research and library support, navigating ethics reviews, obtaining operational data, and integrating research into one’s work.

Panelists: Nykol Esytad, Shari Jorissen, Molly Lauck, Daniel Salter, and Jenny Sherer.

**Student Progress, Best Practices, and Intervention Efforts**

This session will focus on doctoral research quality, student progress, and student experiences – sharing best practices and intervention efforts to ensure student success. The purpose of this session is to explore issues related to doctoral research quality, substantive student progress, and student experience. Panelists will identify strategies for resolving barriers to student success, share best practices of successful mentoring of doctoral students, and share current initiatives/interventions.

Panelists: Laura Lynn, Deborah Inman, Tony Ajsenberg, Andy Kermode, and Alex Dohm.
Research Colloquium

Emerging as a Scholar - Research from Our Graduates

The organizing theme for the 2016 research colloquium is “scholarly emergence”. Moving from a completed dissertation to an articulated research agenda is a challenge that faces all emerging scholars, including our own graduates. A panel of faculty members will report on their research efforts that began as doctoral students at Walden University. They will also provide some insights on their successful transition to faculty researcher. The discussant will identify some themes in their emergence that may be useful to both newer researchers and the individuals who mentor them.

New Scholars Workshop

As is the case with each graduation, we will be offering New Scholars Workshop sessions on Thursday, January 5th, for graduates who are in Orlando for commencement. If you have a graduating student who may be interested in this free program, they can find more information on the New Scholars Workshop page.

Update on Advanced Research Courses

Annie Pezalla, PhD
Associate Director of Curriculum and Assessment

Since launching revisions to the foundational research courses this past spring, we’ve turned our focus to the revising the advanced research courses: Advanced Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis, Advanced Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis, and Advanced Mixed Methods Reasoning and Analysis. Over the summer and fall, we worked closely with the Research Process Advisory Council and several smaller advisory groups, comprised of faculty who were actively involved in mentoring students across programs in the research methods courses, to gather feedback about (a) what trends were occurring in their respective fields for advanced research methods and (b) what gaps they saw in Walden’s research curriculum to address those trends. Thanks to all of you who served in these advisory groups. Your feedback has been instrumental in crystalizing the vision of each revised advanced research course.

The revised advanced research courses will launch in February of 2017. Our hope is that you find them to be robust in opportunities for students to practice more data analysis. An additional hope is that students will utilize their time in the courses to develop a research proposal that will be directly applicable to their capstone. The global vision for all six courses is that they offer a more
holistic overview of research methods, providing students with more continuity across the courses and more scaffolding and support within them.

As always, if you have feedback on any of the research courses in the Center for Research Quality, please don’t be a stranger. E-mail me anytime at annie.pezalla@waldenu.edu. We won’t always be able to make the revisions you ask for, but we will always make note of your questions and concerns and will work closely with you to make sure that you and your students are supported.

Methodology Advisors for Faculty

Marydee Spillett, EdD
Associate Director and Qualitative Methodologist

Got a question about qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodology? The Center for Research Quality offers methodology advisors as resources for faculty. Faculty may email questions to MethodologyAdvice@waldenu.edu. Questions are answered within 48 hours of receipt.

The purpose of the methodology advisors is to provide advice and expertise to faculty in guiding student research projects or conducting faculty research. The methodology advisors are available to answer questions for faculty serving on committees, engaged in collaborative research with students, or engaged in their own Walden-based research. So far, in 2016, the methodology advisors have responded to over 130 faculty inquires.

Please keep in mind that the email account is for faculty use only. Please submit questions to MethodologyAdvice@waldenu.edu via your Walden University account. To allow us to better field your questions, please provide the following information:

The subject line of the email should contain the following:

1. Indicate whether the question involves a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach
2. If related to student committee work, indicate the stage of the research project (prospectus, proposal, final study)
3. If faculty research, please indicate that fact
4. Provide your college affiliation

Examples of appropriate subject lines include:

Subject: Quantitative proposal defense College of Education
Subject: Qualitative faculty research College of Health Sciences
In the body of the email, please include as much relevant information as you can succinctly provide, to facilitate answering your questions. Please address the following issues:

1. The Research Question: what question is the student trying to answer?
2. Proposed sample/population
3. Where student will conduct research
4. When student plans to implement the research study
5. Type of study student is considering
6. Outline of the research process
7. Bullet point the key questions or challenges to the research process with which you need assistance.

Have Statistics, Will Travel...

Matt Jones, PhD
Methodologist, Core Faculty

Over the years one of the biggest challenges I have faced is exciting students about quantitative analysis. I am sure many of you share my conflicting emotions of anguish and excitement when speaking to students about statistics. I have received countless reminders from colleagues that I am not training statisticians (we can debate here about how to define “statistician”), and I recognize that viewpoint — not everyone is going to love this subject. I do think we all agree that students come to us wanting to delve deeply into their respective disciplines, improve their skills, and make some difference in the social world. I have always felt that having some level of statistical literacy is a valuable executive competency that will assist leaders in making positive changes and November's results from a recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) demonstrate the importance of quantitative literacy as a fundamental and highly desired skill in modern organizations.

SHRM noted that over the last five years, 65% of sampled organizations increased the number of positions that require quantitative skills. Although the survey does emphasize traditional quantitative laden titles like “data analyst,” “research analyst,” et cetera, I think SHRM’s definition of data analysis is one that we should emphasize to our students. The survey summary notes,

For the purposes of this research, data analysis skills are defined as the ability to gather, analyze and draw practical conclusions from data as well as communicate data findings to others.

The challenge many students have encountered is that they aren’t immediately exposed to this definition, and/or their quantitative courses don’t emphasize this practical application of statistics across all fields. As such, the market
suffers from a deficit of qualified labor and students are potentially facing lost income. Results of another survey released last month demonstrate that these jobs have quite attractive salaries. Although the project focused on the title "statistician," it is important to note many of these respondents do not have degrees in statistics, but might have degrees in a field such as criminal justice, education, management, and are heavily engaged in analytic work.

Attractive salaries and increased market demand for those with quantitative knowledge is no surprise as this was predicted in a McKinsey report a few years ago. The report projected that by 2018 the U.S. would “face a shortage of 140,000 to 190,000 people with deep analytical skills as well as 1.5 million managers and analysts with the know-how to use the analysis of big data to make effective decisions.” So even if your students have absolutely no interest in ever conducting quantitative analysis once they leave the University, if they currently occupy or aspire to obtain a managerial role, an understanding of how to make decisions using data is critical.

The future is very bright and open for individuals with skills in statistical thinking and analysis, especially if they can communicate results to a lay audience. Hopefully, these recent publications can be used as tools for mentors to help motivate students by demonstrating the importance and value of quantitative analysis, beyond the required coursework and capstone. As always, I am interested in hearing your thoughts and can be contacted at matthew.jones2@waldenu.edu.

SPSS PROCESS Macro

Sunny Liu, PhD  
Quantitative Methodologist

Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis

Lately we have had some requests from the faculty and students about the mediation and moderation models in the statistical analysis. Testing mediation or moderation is a fairly common practice in quantitative studies when dealing with complex relationships among variables. Often such model is based on a theoretical model or framework in which the position of the variables and the direction of the effect among them are laid out before the analyses are conducted. When testing mediation model, the “causal steps” proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) have been the traditional approach. In this model, several conditions such as the significance of the direct effect, the indirect effect, and the total effect from the independent variable(s) to the dependent variable(s) through the mediator(s) are tested and then the mediating effect is implied rather than directly confirmed in this approach when all the conditions are satisfied.
In comparison, the SPSS PROCESS macro developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) has been gaining popularity in testing such models because it can test the mediation relationship directly and also because of its simplicity in dealing with complex models with one or many mediators, moderators, and the combination of them (called conditional process analysis). The macro is free and can be downloaded from the following website:


All the instructions about how to install the macro and also the model numbers can be found on the website. The current version of the macro is PROCESS v2.16. It currently has 76 models. It’s important to point out that almost all the models can only handle continuous or dummy variables at this point. Therefore, please continue checking the future version for further improvement of the macro. For the details about the models, please refer to the following file:


Data Resources for Research

Jenny Sherer, MEd, CIP
Associate Director, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

As students develop their research topics, determining how best to collect data for their studies can be a daunting challenge. Unfortunately, this challenge leads some students to focusing so much on determining how new data can be generated that they miss the opportunity to learn from or build on previous research. Even if they are not considering conducting a secondary analysis of a pre-existing dataset, students are encouraged to access datasets available via the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) database. Sometimes this information can be useful to describe the extent of the problem or writing the literature review.

The ICPSR site offers multiple research support resources such as training in quantitative literacy, tips on data management, and tutorials on how data can be analyzed. The site is available to all students and faculty. To get full use of the site, including access to hundreds of thousands of databases, researchers will need to sign in with their waldenu.edu email address. More information is available on the CRQ website or ICPSR can be accessed directly at http://www.icpsr.umich.edu.
Conference Presentation – DBA Capstone Pilot

Kristina Harris, DBA
Operations Manager

Jan Garfield, from the College of Management and Technology, and I recently attended and presented at the Accreditation Council of Business Schools and Program (ACBSP) Region 2 Conference (Eastern Council) in Washington, DC. Our presentation was on the new DBA pilot program regarding the work-based capstone. This new pilot is starting its third cohort of DBA students working with nonprofit organizations for their doctoral study project, adhering to Walden’s mission to social change.


Left to right: Dr. Jan Garfield, Dr. Jane Mattes, Chair of Eastern Council of Business Schools and Programs, and Dr. Kristina Harris at ACBSP Region 2 Conference.

Building Faculty Research Capacity

Daniel Salter, PhD
Director, Strategic Research Initiatives

Central to the mission of the CRQ are support and development of research capacity across the entire scholarly timeline: from the newest doctoral student to the most senior researcher. For faculty, especially those who are new to the process and/or to Walden, conducting research in a distributed university environment can be a daunting. To reduce some of that challenge, Molly Lauck and I have been offering webinars focused specifically on developing faculty
research capacity. We also recognize the dynamic nature of research and challenged ourselves to find information for even the most experienced faculty.

This fall’s sessions have been archived on the Center for Faculty Excellence website, which you can view by following the links. We are already planning for 2017 (including our offerings at the university faculty meeting, detailed in the article above), so if you have a specific topic of interest, please do not be bashful. Email me at daniel.salter@waldenu.edu.

Resources That Support Faculty Research: Mapping the Landscape at Walden
Funding Your Research Efforts: Internal Programs at Walden
Considering Your Options for an Online Presence as a Researcher

Upcoming Research Grant Opportunity

Molly Lauck, PhD
Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

2017 David A. Wilson Award for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Open to faculty employed at a university within the Laureate International University network, the Wilson Award recognizes and supports the excellence and innovation of Laureate International University network faculty members.

Eligibility

- Open to all faculty (core and contributing).
- Faculty must have been employed by Walden for a minimum one year prior to the date of application.

Application Requirements

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to Walden and its mission.
- Demonstrate a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.
- Present a compelling research topic on teaching and learning in higher education.
- Show outstanding success with students and professional respect of peers.
- Be willing to secure the submission/publication of the research results in an arbitrated journal.

The Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, working with the Research-based Review Committee, will select one semi-finalist from the pool of Walden applicants to be considered by the Laureate Global Selection Committee.
Program Timeline

- Walden Applicant deadline: 1/23/2017
- Walden Semi-finalist announced: 2/6/2017
- Wilson Award winners announced: April 2017

Information about the 2017 Wilson Award program, including the application and instructions about how to apply, is located on the CRQ website at http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/internalfunding/resources. Questions about the Wilson Award program should be directed to Dr. Molly Lauck at grants@waldenu.edu.