Greetings from the Executive Director | Laura Knight Lynn

Walden Community,

We are happy to share our third issue of re:Research.

In this issue, we share important updates and reminders related to your research work and your work to support your students. Highlighted are some key events from Summer Session and the Faculty Meeting related to supporting student research.

**Identifying and Supporting Excellence in Research Mentoring in Our Faculty**

It was great to see excellence in research mentoring and student research throughout the Summer 2011 Faculty Meeting and Academic Residency activities.

In the Ph.D. Research Panel, *Perspectives on Doctoral Research: A Conversation with Graduates and Committee Chairs*, graduates Richard Cox and Mary Hotalling discussed the process of planning and implementing their dissertation studies. Committee members Kurt Schoch and William Barkley shared insights on how these students navigated the process and shared ways they were able to support student needs.

The Frank Dilley Award for Outstanding Doctoral Study recipient was Valerie Lyle, from the Ed.D. program in the Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership. Dr. Lyle shared the steps she took to ensure excellence in her case study research, in conversation with her chair, Deanna Boddie, and interim associate dean, Steve Wells. Dr. Boddie noted how certain aspects of the process were navigated and the important elements of case study research. Dr. Wells emphasized important “take-aways” in developing Ed.D. project study areas, for the audience.

Through both of these discussions, the steps that faculty took to support the unique needs of their students were clear. As we continue to refine our approach to faculty training for research mentoring, leadership from strong mentors will be essential.

**Supporting University Research Reviewers (URRs)**

We were pleased to have many of our URRs with us in Minneapolis for a dynamic face-to-face training, with many more attending virtually. Lou
Milanesi describes this training in greater detail below. It will be important to use multiple training modalities to support excellence in research mentors and URR reviewers.

In the months to come, you will see more research webinars, tutorials, and just-in-time supports. I hope you can take advantage of these opportunities for refreshers and areas you would like to strengthen. Daniel Salter details the new tutorials in methodology and disseminating your research later in this newsletter. Let us know your thoughts on available resources and suggestions you have for additional resources based on your mentoring needs.

I hope you enjoy this issue and let us know what questions or comments you have at crs@waldenu.edu.

Sincerely,

Laura

**URR Training Held at Minneapolis** | Lou Milanesi

The University Research Review (URR) process was adopted by the University, effective January 1, 2009, for all graduate capstone research projects. The new URR process was informed from a 2008 Center for Research Support study of the previous Academic Review (AR) process. That study included input from interviews with most of the practicing reviewers, veteran committee chairs and administrators. Since then, 428 faculty members have received the initial 2-week orientation required to serve in this challenging role. Those individuals currently serving as URRs were surveyed during April of this year, regarding their experience in the role and perceived needs for clarification of the process. These data were used to inform plans for process improvement and additional URR training online and face-to-face.

Supported by the Center for Faculty Excellence, approximately 100 faculty members who are currently assigned to URR service attended a 4-hour training session at the Summer 2011 Faculty Meeting in Minneapolis. This session included a brief quiz that served to prompt discussion to clarify the URR role, hands on analyses of problem statements, and a case study analysis that also included of a critique of a mock meeting between the chair and the member serving in the URR role. Lessons learned from the session will be used to develop follow-up webinars for those unable to attend. Planning is also underway for similar sessions related to other functional roles on the research committee: chair, content advisor, and methods advisor.
Summer 2011 Research Symposium | Daniel Salter

Twice each year, Walden University hosts a research symposium during the Winter and Summer academic residencies. The two “action shots” on the left are from the symposium held this past July, on the University of Minnesota campus.

At a symposium, selected members of our research community share their accomplishments, using two different formats. Using a **roundtable** format, six individual or groups of researchers were available for interactive discussions of their work, including cyber-bullying, health and insurance, cultural factors in student success, professional development, simulation-based learning, and dropout prevention.

The **poster** format gives researchers a chance to engage with all individuals attending the symposium and to network with other interested researchers. At this symposium, we had 22 poster presentations, half of which were by new doctoral graduates (including our first D.B.A. presenters). Among the faculty presenters, we had two groups whose research was supported by Presidential Research Fellowships, and one that was funded by an Educational Leadership Research Grant from the Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership.

A list of all the poster topics can be found in the symposium [program booklet](#), and sample posters are available on the CRS website’s **Research Dissemination Opportunities** page. And, we are already making plans for the 2012 Winter Research Symposium in Miami. Watch this newsletter and the CRS website for more information and our **Call for Presenters**.

Update on the Dissertation Rubric Revision | by Gary Burkholder

As many of you are aware, we are in the process of revising the Ph.D. dissertation rubric. The current rubric was developed by faculty, tested, and launched in 2003. We have gotten a lot of feedback, both internally and externally, that it was time to revisit the rubric as part of the overall Doctoral Capstone Quality Improvement efforts. I am chairing the Rubric Revision Committee and am so fortunate to be working with a group of scholars representing the various colleges. The committee is comprised of Linda Crawford, COEL;
John Nirenberg, CMT; Louis Milanesi, CRS; and Angela Prehn, CHS. We spent approximately 3 months discussing the current rubric and where its strengths and challenges lie. After much discussion, the group felt it was important to separate the checklist aspect of the rubric from a smaller set of quality indicators that would be used to 1) verify that key components of the dissertation have been met; and 2) to assess doctoral quality.

At the next step, we distributed the draft rubric to core faculty in each of the programs who have research expertise in quantitative, qualitative, and/or mixed methods research. We were pleased with the thorough and thoughtful feedback, and we were especially pleased to learn that in terms of format, we were right where people wanted us to be with the rubric’s structure and function. The idea of a checklist that is the responsibility of the student and a set of much simpler quality indicators that are the purview of the Chair, Committee Member, and University Research Reviewer made sense to those who reviewed it.

During the month of August, we will be engaged in a number of activities.

- Distributing the drafts to schools to socialize with and gain feedback from their Curriculum and Academic Policy (CAP) committees.
- Reviewing the documents at the Office of Academic Affairs monthly meeting and the University Curriculum and Academic Policy (UCAP) committee for input and guidance.
- Determining the overall format.

Thank you to those who have provided, and may have the opportunity to provide, feedback on the documents.

**UPDATE: FRIG Program Timeline | by Molly Lauck**

**Note.** We have had to make a couple of changes to the application and deadline dates for the FRIG Program, which were noted in the July issue of *re:Research.*

The Faculty Research Initiative Grant (FRIG) program was established to support excellence in scholarly work by providing funding for select faculty research projects deemed to be of exceptional merit. The program is open to all faculty who have been employed by Walden for a minimum of six months and is intended to provide “seed money” for the development of faculty research agendas. Funds can be used to support pilot research projects, small scale research studies, and to supplement new areas of investigation that are spin-off studies or sub-studies of larger ongoing research projects.

The director of the Office of Research & Sponsored
Programs (ORSP), working with the research-based review committee, will make awards of up to $10,000, in response to research proposals submitted. A total of up to $120,000 will be awarded in November 2011.

Additional information, including the 2011 FRIG Program Request For Proposals (RFP), can be found on the ORSP page of the CRS website. Questions about the FRIG program should be directed to grants@waldenu.edu.

New Research Tutorials Available | Daniel Salter

In 2011, the Center for Research Support has been actively developing some additional, self-paced tutorials to support researchers at Walden. The first two went “live” this summer, both of which are appropriate students and faculty.

**Phenomenological Research**

This tutorial summarizes the basics of phenomenology, as a philosophy and as a research approach. Emphases are on distinguishing two main schools of phenomenology and determining the appropriateness of phenomenology for a research question.

**Disseminating Your Research**

This tutorial provides suggestions and guidelines to scholar-practitioners who are interested in disseminating their research through verbal presentations and talks, and written means, such as publications and articles.

Please note that other tutorials can be found on the Research Tutorials and Webinars page of the CRS website, including information on Turnitin.com, the Participant Pool, and using the Faculty Expertise Directory (FED). If you have any questions, or suggestions for future tutorials that we should consider, please send an email to CRS@waldenu.edu

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**Our Mission**

The overarching mission of the Center for Research Support 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.
Accreditation: Your Voice in Continuing Quality | by Gary Burkholder

As part of voluntary membership in the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association region, institutions agree to undergo a periodic process of reaffirmation of regional accreditation. Many individuals from departments within Walden University are engaged in a process of self-study to achieve that goal. The process of reaffirmation of accreditation provides us with a unique opportunity to examine the areas in which we are strong and the opportunities we have to become better at demonstrating excellence in teaching, learning by our students, and that Walden University “lives” its mission of positive social change. This reaffirmation is accomplished by demonstrating that we continue to meet the standards set by five Core Criteria: Mission and Integrity; Preparing for the Future; Student Learning and Effective Teaching; Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge; and Engagement and Service.

The steering committee has now approved the outlines for each of the criterion chapters, and the working groups are now writing the first drafts of their chapters. Research fits very strongly into the self-study. Here are a few examples. In Criterion 1, Mission and Integrity, we must speak to how we maintain integrity of research. In Criterion 2, Planning for the Future, we must be able to demonstrate that, while we have large doctoral programs, we allocate resources to ensure that we continue to grow but with quality of programs and quality of doctoral research. In Criterion 3, Student Learning and Effective Teaching, we just show that we have clear outcomes related to research and that our students meet those outcomes. In Criterion 4, Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge, we demonstrate that Walden University is committed to lifelong learning for its faculty, staff, and students. Walden must also demonstrate that we support creativity, practice, and social responsibility.

One working group is dedicated specifically to research, with Dr. Louis Milanesi and myself as Co-Chairs. We are joined by Jeff Zuckerman, Writing Center, and Josh Saunders, director of product management for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. We meet regularly and engage in conversation that helps ensure issues related to doctoral quality, as well as the current initiatives related to improving overall quality, are well represented in the self-study.

If you have any questions about the HLC self-study process, please feel free to contact HLCFeedback@waldenu.edu. We also invite you to visit Accreditation: Your Voice in Continuing Quality in the eCampus community and participate in the discussions.
Tips for Helping Doctoral Students to Obtain Ethics Approval for Research in Clinical and Intervention Settings | Leilani Endicott

In our last newsletter, we posted some tips for research in education settings. This issue, we want you to be aware that a new [IRB guide](#) has been posted to help students consider the ethical issues relevant to doctoral research occurring in **clinical and intervention settings**. These tips will be most helpful to students early in the research planning process, when they are considering potential research designs, sites, and samples. Below are some of the core pieces of research ethics guidance for students who will be conducting their doctoral research in an intervention context, including any form of clinical treatment, psychotherapy, support groups, psycho-educational programs, or other therapeutic programs.

**What Kinds of Data May I Analyze from My Own Clients/Patients?**

Service providers may analyze data from their own clients only when (a) the data are generated as a [byproduct of normal intervention practices](#), (b) no client names/identifiers are recorded in the research documents, and (c) the IRB determines that the study is [eligible for a HIPAA-compliant waiver](#) of authorization to use protected health information for research purposes. This approach is sometimes called [chart review](#), [archival analysis](#), or [secondary data analysis](#). It can also be used to analyze other providers’ records. Secondary data analysis can be approved for the following:

- intake assessments
- on-going assessments that document progress
- worksheets or journals that primarily serve therapeutic purposes (as opposed to research purposes)
- clinical records
- any other data that are generated as a result of regular intervention activities.

**What Kinds of Data May NOT Be Collected from My Own Clients/Patients?**

- interviews
- focus groups
- surveys or assessment that are for research purposes only and serve no direct purpose for the clients’/patients’ benefit

**Can I Interview or Survey People Who Are Undergoing Treatment?**

People in treatment (or preparing to begin treatment) are more vulnerable than the general population so clinical researchers are encouraged to address
research question(s) using data from clients who have completed treatment whenever possible. Another ethical alternative is to conduct secondary analysis on treatment records. When these options are not feasible, then recruiting current intervention/therapy clients into an interview or questionnaire study is generally approvable, as long as:

- the data collection activities will not interfere with treatment progress (this criteria will be assessed by the IRB),
- the researcher is not a trusted or authority figure to the clients, and
- recruitment ensures voluntary research participation as much as possible.

What Details Are Important in Setting Up the Research Arrangements with my Partner Site? When Should I Ask the Site to Sign a Letter of Cooperation?

Unless participant recruitment will occur via the Walden participant pool or public methods (newspaper, phone book, etc.), each study will require some sort of letter of cooperation from the partner site(s). The signed letter is not required at the time the IRB application is submitted; a conditional IRB approval can be issued without the signed letter (and then the final IRB approval will be issued when the signed letter is received by the IRB). The option to obtain conditional approval is helpful when the site prefers that IRB review occur prior to their signing of the letter of cooperation. Students are encouraged to confer with the site early in the proposal development process to learn about the site’s research policies and preferences. However, it is generally not a good idea to ask them to actually sign a letter until the recruitment and data collection procedures have been finalized.

The letter of cooperation should include the following:

- Detailed description of any recruitment, data collection, member-checking, and results dissemination activities that will occur at the site.
- Detailed description of the involvement of any of the site’s personnel, rooms, or resources.
- Clarity regarding whether the site personnel are providing any supervision of the research activities (particularly if the local personnel will be relied upon to help resolve a crisis situation). If not, then it is assumed that only the remote faculty members are supervising the researcher.
- Clear indication of the facility's role in sponsoring and assuming liability for the therapy/intervention under study. (Walden cannot sponsor, oversee, or assume liability for interventions.) If the site is making any modifications to its standard intervention procedures in order to accommodate the research study, the letter needs to confirm that the site is willingly adopting these changes, as part of their normal operations during the course of the study.
Can I Study Physiological Outcomes (Cortisol Levels, Neurological Functioning, Etc.)?

As per APA ethics code (section 2.01 on Boundaries of Competence), doctoral research must stay within the scope of the program’s coursework and may only cross over into other domains when the researcher’s coursework, training, and committee configuration support an interdisciplinary approach.

Do I Need Special Training to Collect Data from a Vulnerable Clinical Population?

Yes, in many cases the IRB will require that researchers demonstrate or supplement their qualifications before they can be approved to conduct research with a vulnerable clinical population (e.g., individuals with mental or emotional disabilities). As per APA ethics code (section 2.01 on Boundaries of Competence), the IRB can only approve students to complete tasks for which they have adequate training, experience, and supervision. The IRB will work with the committee to develop a training plan. For example, the student may be required to first conduct a video-recorded pilot interview, which would be reviewed by a faculty member for feedback. In some cases, a mock interview with a faculty member might be required before the researcher can be approved to work with the clinical population.

Can I Compare Two Treatment Approaches, or Compare a Treatment and Control Group?

The IRB cautions students against attempting this type of study for the doctoral dissertation. While prospective quantitative designs involving random assignment to experimental/control groups continue to be the clinical effectiveness “gold standard,” they are very difficult, expensive, and time-consuming for novice researchers to implement in such a manner that potential benefits outweigh potential risks. Even if the difficulty, expense, and time factors could be overcome, the main challenge is that Walden cannot sponsor or oversee interventions, so that means the Walden student may not manipulate the intervention for research purposes. In other words, Walden students may not randomly assign clients to different treatment conditions or have them delay their treatment in order to serve as a control group. The only possible exception (that would permit random assignment to groups) would be if the site has its own IRB that can oversee the intervention delivery and if the Walden student is eligible to serve as a primary investigator under the site’s IRB (e.g., if the student is employed by the site).

With the ability to randomize groups being limited for most students, the strongest quantitative option to compare two treatment approaches would be a quasi-experimental design (comparison of pre-existing groups). Note that it may be possible to retrospectively compare groups that received different types of treatment by performing secondary analysis of archival data from intake/final assessments. Another retrospective option might be a qualitative approach.
(such as phenomenology or case study) to analyze interview data from individuals who have experienced the two types of treatment the researcher wishes to compare.

As always, any students or faculty who have questions about ethics compliance in a research study can contact the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at IRB@waldenu.edu. Additional guidance can be found in the ORIC page of the CRS website.

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