Greetings from the Executive Director

Laura Knight Lynn, PhD
Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

The summer has been very productive for the Center for Research Quality (CRQ), and we hope your fall term is off to a great start.

Support for doctoral candidates and their mentors continues to be a high priority for us. Substantive progress during the dissertation and doctoral study phase while ensuring doctoral quality is essential. We understand that these goals are not that easy to achieve, however. So, know that we are here to partner with you in supporting your students—whether the most challenging student you have worked with or a student you would like to guide to greater heights.

This month’s newsletter provides some reminders of our resources and provides some guidance for finding innovative ways to support our students. Webinars, live and recorded, like our Committee Roles and Desired Practices and the upcoming Early Engagement for URRs, provide some clear examples of how some of our experienced faculty have found time-efficient methods for helping our students move forward, stay motivated, and produce good work. See Deborah Inman’s article for more examples.

Occasionally students need resources for access to secondary data like ICPSR, and other times they need questions answered from one of our methodologists during office hours. Sometimes, students seek support from outside consultants not realizing that much of that type of information and support is available in house. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with our resources or, if you are not sure what might help, to reach out to our resource advice role account for support. resourceadvice@waldenu.edu

In addition to supporting our doctoral students, we are pleased to continue to support our faculty scholarship and future scholars, such as our recent faculty webinars on developing research capacity and internal funding opportunities. Daniel Salter’s article in this newsletter also features some of the steps and strides we are making in this area for our graduates, and we welcome your feedback and any questions you have about your success at Walden as a researcher.
Finally, because we tend to welcome many new faculty members to Walden in the fall, I have asked each member of the CRQ to contribute to this super-sized edition of *re:Research*, and to provide a small bio on their specific role in the Center and any related research interests.

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

Best

Laura

Laura began her role as executive director of the CRQ in 2010, but has enjoyed a history of service at Walden since 2003 as doctoral faculty member in the Riley College of Education and Leadership, Research Coordinator in the College of Education, and later associate director in the Center for Research Support (now the Center for Research Quality). In addition to her work supporting faculty and doctoral students at Walden, Laura’s interdisciplinary research interests and activities include leadership, mentoring, women’s workplace experiences, doctoral student progress, graduate student research self-efficacy, and media literacy. Laura’s experience outside higher education includes program evaluation, non-profit management and support, community research, and health-care outcomes research.

MyDR Enhancements

Tony Ajsenberg
Associate Director, Office of Student Research Administration

Throughout 2016 the Office of Student Research Administration (OSRA) has collaborated with Laureate’s IT department to make many enhancements to the My Doctoral Research (MyDR) system. Since the launch of MyDR, the OSRA along with IT have looked for common issues faculty and students have been experiencing and what is possible with our existing systems. Listed below is a summary of some of the enhancements that have been implemented in 2016.

- **Automation of emails in the committee review section**
  - MyDR now creates an automated email after the first reviewer completes an evaluation stating that it is time for the second reviewer to complete their review. The system will then send an email when it is time for chair reconciliation.

- **Implemented check upon student submission to ensure URR is assigned**
  - If a URR is not assigned at the time of a student submission, an email alert is sent to the committee, student, OSRA as well as the Program Director.
This enhancement helps ensure that a URR is assigned ASAP to avoid any delays.

- **Revisions on all MyDR automated emails**
  - We have gathered extensive feedback since MyDR was launched and incorporated new language, as well as clarified things where needed, in the system generated emails. We are constantly looking at these emails and will make edits when needed and when IT is able to implement the changes.

- **Added email addresses to Committee Formation section of web landing page**

- **Previous and new members of committee are notified when someone is replaced on a committee**
  - An email is now sent to the previous member as well as the new member notifying them of a change of structure on the committee.

These changes are just some of the enhancements that have been implemented in 2016. Numerous other things have been improved on the back end of the system to improve the overall student and faculty experience. We continue to work closely with IT, faculty, and students to make needed improvements when possible.

  *Tony manages the Office of Student Research Administration, which coordinates the capstone processes for students and their committees.*

**Intervention Oversight**

*Leilani Endicott, PhD*  
IRB Chair  
Director, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

**Clarification of University Policy Regarding Intervention Oversight**

We receive quite a few questions about whether intervention research is permitted. Research about interventions is encouraged at Walden, as long as the intervention is delivered and overseen by a partner site with the appropriate qualifications. A student cannot deliver interventions under the auspices of Walden University, though in many cases a student can be part of intervention design or delivery within the scope of the student's role at the partner site.

The student handbook now includes the following section to clarify the role of partner sites when a student's doctoral project involves some sort of intervention: *During the capstone phase, Walden University and its IRB can only oversee the data collection that is relevant to the capstone analysis. Any interventions, initiatives, therapy, education, training, or other programs that*
are relevant to the capstone must be overseen by partner sites that are appropriately qualified to do so.

This policy can be found in the table that outlines the Doctoral Capstone Completion Process under the section labeled as “Completion of Doctoral Capstone.” Questions about this policy can be directed to IRB@waldenu.edu.

**Leilani** leads the research ethics departments for Walden University and the University of Liverpool online programs. She chairs the ethics boards that review student and faculty research and also teaches seminars on research ethics and methodology online and at residencies. Some of Leilani’s research and intervention partners include the Little Earth of United Tribes Family Center, Tubman Family Alliance, Army Community Services, Warriors in Transition Program, Minnesota International Center, Minnesota State Department of Education, and University of Minnesota Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Her research on resilience, ethical cognition/development, and impact of community programs has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Center for Ethical Development, the University of Minnesota, and Walden University.

### Resources for Doctoral Research

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

As students focus on the development of their research proposals (and faculty members, too!), they can benefit from resources which provide the opportunity to learn from other studies. Taking advantage of the experience of others can help solidify the topic under study or identify a new direction for their own studies. Whether considering the possibility of analyzing pre-existing datasets or desiring to learn more about how to conduct a study, the following resources can help students learn about and from prior research:

**Walden Participant Pool**

The Participant Pool is a website that acts as a virtual bulletin board, connecting Walden researchers to members of our community who are interested in participating in those studies. The website is open to all faculty and students, and is a great way to see some of the research being conducted by Walden researchers. Students also have the ability to learn by doing if they choose to participate in studies and thus see the process from a participant’s point of view. Or perhaps, practical tips could be learned by just visiting the site and seeing what other researchers are doing.

Additional information about the Participant Pool is available on the CRQ website, or feel free to direct any questions to participantpool@waldenu.edu. The site can be accessed directly at: [http://walden.sona-systems.com](http://walden.sona-systems.com).
Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)

Many students determine that conducting a secondary analysis of existing data would be the best method for their studies. Finding available datasets can be difficult, however. A good starting point is to search through datasets available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). As part of Walden’s membership in ICPSR, students and faculty can search through thousands of databases, publications and training in quantitative literacy. To access a dataset, researchers will need to create an account using a ‘waldenu.edu’ address.

Additional information is available online via the following link on the Research Resources page on the CRQ website or questions can be sent to datasetaccess@waldenu.edu. ICPSR resources can also be accessed via the site directly at: http://www.icpsr.umich.edu.

As associate director in the Office of Research Ethics and Compliance (OREC), Jenny works on initiatives to help educate researchers about issues that need to be considered related to the ethical review and conduct of research. She has been with the university for almost 10 years, and has been with OREC since 2008.

New Research Funding Opportunities

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

Kristina Harris, DBA
Operations Manager

In addition to our existing programs, two new funding opportunities to support research are now available to faculty this Fall. These grants have their own unique program goals and mechanisms, as well as differing application and submission processes, and both allow for faculty release time to conduct research. Information about the funding opportunities, including how to apply, are included in the request for proposals (RFP) posted on the Internal Funding area of the CRQ website. Program timelines, along with significant points of which to make note, for each of the grants are highlighted below.

Hybrid Teaching & Learning (HTL) Research Grant

The HTL research grant is offered through the Laureate Network Research Office and affords Laureate network faculty the opportunity to investigate the impact of digital teaching and learning methods on learning outcomes. The grant program, which is open to all
faculty across the Laureate network, is intended to support research on teaching and learning that directly supports the Laureate hybridity goals.

- The [HTL grant program](#) is only open to faculty (core and contributing). Staff and academic administrators are not eligible to apply.
- Grant requests are limited to a maximum of $10,000 for single institution studies and a maximum of $20,000 for grants involving more than one institution.
- A letter of institutional support for the proposed research is required as part of the grant application.
- Research ethics (IRB) approval from Walden is required in order to apply.
- Applications should be submitted electronically to LNOResearch@laureate.net.
- **1 October 2016**: Application deadline.
- **20 November 2016**: Grant recipients announced.

**Research & Applications for Social Change (RASC) Grant.**

Offered through Walden’s Research & Sponsored Programs Office, the [RASC grant](#) enables members of the Walden community to make a significant and meaningful change in academic and social communities, either locally and globally. The grant will be awarded to the applicants who submit outstanding proposals that reflect the university's mission to foster social change through research and the education of scholar-practitioners, as well as Walden’s determination to uniquely effect positive social change worldwide. The grant program is open to Walden faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external candidates.

- The RASC grant program will accept two types of proposals – [Social Change Research-based Proposals](#) and [Applications in Social Change Project Proposals](#). Applicants must choose which type of proposal they will submit as each applicant is limited to one application.
- Grant funding will be scaffolded to prioritize transdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to research and applications of social change projects. Investigators should read the RFP closely to determine the grant level that best aligns with the structure of their proposed research and/or project.
- RASC Grant ceilings for research-based and applied project proposals from faculty/staff range from $7,500 - $17,500 accordingly.
- Recipients of the RASC Grant automatically become Walden University Social Change Fellows.
- Applications should be submitted electronically to grants@waldenu.edu.
- **1 November, 2016**: Application deadline.
- **1 December, 2016**: Grant recipients announced.

Questions about both grant programs should be directed to Dr. [Molly Lauck](#) at grants@waldenu.edu.
As director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Molly supports faculty and student research through internal grant opportunities, external grant resources, research dissemination support, and managing access to restricted access database sets. She also facilitates the Outstanding Student Research Award Program. Molly joined Walden in 2006 as contributing faculty in Human Services.

Kristina has been with the CRQ for the past 6 years. Her work in creating sustainable networks was featured in the Walden Alumni magazine. Kristina supports the CRQ in many areas: website management, special projects, research and sponsored programs, and DBA liaison for MyDR related issues. She also teaches for the DBA program. In her spare time, she is busy with her family and community service activities.

Research Support for Doctoral Graduates

Daniel Salter, PhD
Director, Strategic Research Initiatives

The mission of the CRQ encompasses support for Walden researchers across their entire careers, including graduates of our doctoral programs. Here’s a sample of some new programs and services we are making available to this group through the CRQ.

The New Scholars Workshop

Designed specifically for the newest doctoral graduates, the New Scholars Workshop addresses dissemination of doctoral research in various venues (so much easier to have this conversation after the research is completed!) and how to take some “next steps” in theirs journey as scholars. The NSW is a 4-hour workshop, delivered face-to-face at graduation and virtually on selected Saturdays.

Affiliate Researchers

From conducting NSWs over the past few years, we have identified a sub-group of graduates who would benefit from a continued research “relationship” with the university. In a perfect world, our graduates will publish and continue their work under the auspices of their current institution or place of employment. For graduates without that type of oversight or ones who are independently employed, those scholarly efforts are more difficult. In the fall of 2016, we will be piloting Affiliate Researcher status for this handful of students who need to continue their research efforts with us.

Scholar Commons – New and Emerging Scholars

This year, we have been developing the Scholar Commons as microsite within Walden’s Google domain to curate all the various programs and services that support our academic community’s research capacity and productivity (still a
work-in-progress). The New and Emerging Scholars section contains a range of existing services for graduates, including links to the Presidential Alumni Research Dissemination Award and the very popular Career Center’s Doctoral Webinar Series.

In his role in the CRQ, Daniel works on policies and practices related to doctoral education and research, develops programs to support researchers, manages many of the university’s dissemination efforts, and mentors PhD students in the Riley College of Education and Leadership. His research interests involve applications of Jungian theory to practice, researcher development, and the role of technology in higher education. Daniel has been with Walden for 12 years, six in the CRQ.

Updates from Research Quality Management

Deborah Inman, EdD
Director, Office of Research Quality Management

This year has certainly been a busy and very productive one for the Office of Research Quality Management in the CRQ, and I want to highlight some of which have been very important.

A year ago (August 31, 2015) we implemented the SU grading enhancements with the guidance and support of the Research Process Advisory Council (RPAC) and Research Curriculum and Academic Policy (RCAP) committee. To support faculty, we held several webinars on the SU grading guidelines, best practices for student substantive progress, and helping faculty understand how to support students to ensure they understood the SU grading expectations for term plans and student progress.

We continued throughout 2016 to further our support and guidance by identifying and sharing best practices to ensure substantive student progress, through NFM faculty professional development sessions and webinars on the role of committee members in supporting substantive progress and early engagement of URRs.

Scholarly writing has continued to be an area of concern and confusion regarding faculty evaluation of student work. Working with the guidance and support of RPAC and Martha King, associate director in the Writing Center, we revised the wording of one of the dissertation rubric items to clarify the expectations of scholarly writing as part of the dissertation evaluation. We hosted a webinar with the writing center on scholarly writing including form and style requirements for doctoral capstone documents and faculty evaluation to ensure faculty understanding of expectations.
We have revised the University Research Reviewer (URR) faculty training course to include additional topics:

- Understanding the URR’s roles and responsibilities in the TaskStream/MyDR evaluation process,
- Emphasis on the importance of effective communication with the chair as well as resolving disagreements between URR and committee chair,
- Emphasis on meaningful, timely, and respectful feedback to students, and
- Best practices for URRs.

We created MyDR liaison and steering committees to provide program-level communication with CRQ:

- The **faculty steering committee** member(s) represent their college in quarterly meetings where the CRQ provides updates regarding enhancements, common concerns, and efforts to evaluate and improve MyDR. The steering committee members keep their program leadership informed of MyDR updates/enhancements.

- The **program faculty liaisons** serve as a “go-to” faculty member for other faculty in their programs with problems or questions regarding MyDR. The CRQ provides additional training and guidance for faculty liaisons as needed, so they are consistent with CRQ responses to faculty for various issues. The liaison will also reach out to the CRQ when there are continuing concerns or areas where additional support is needed. This role provides targeted program communication and support and a clear voice on the experience and needs for each program. The program liaison(s) inform program leaders of continuing/consistent issues faced by faculty in the MyDR evaluation process.

Regarding methodology support, we remain available to support students and faculty as needed. We added both qualitative and quantitative methodology office hours for students this past year and continue to offer methodology advice to faculty through our role account. If you have methodology related questions, please contact us through the MethodologyAdvice@Waldenu.edu role account or refer your students to attend our methodology office hours.

*Deborah* oversees the University Research Review (URR) process, MyDR support, methodology advising services, and research curriculum and training. Deborah chairs the Research Process Advisory Council (RPAC) and enjoys the collaboration with program leaders to ensure research quality and substantive progress of doctoral students, university wide. Deborah has education research, policy and evaluation experience in local, state, national and international arenas which has influenced her research interests in policy, learning organizations, and globalization of education and the economy. Deborah has been with Walden for over five years.
Research Courses Update

Annie Pezalla, PhD
Associate Director of Curriculum and Assessment

It has been a busy spring and summer in the Center for Research Quality, and we’re looking forward to another full term this fall with our research courses.

As many of you know, we launched our revised Research Theory, Design, and Methods class this February, and we launched our revised Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis and Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis this May. Thanks to all of you who were involved in the design, implementation, and continual refinement of those courses.

And to those of you who have been teaching the courses, but have not yet had the chance to connect with me on your experiences in them, please don’t be a stranger: Write me any time at annie.pezalla@waldenu.edu with your thoughts and questions. Your feedback is instrumental in ensuring that our research training curriculum is meeting the needs of our students.

Since launching the three foundational research courses, we’ve turned our attention to the CRQ’s advanced research courses: Advanced Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis, Advanced Qualitative Reasoning and Analysis, and Advanced Mixed Methods Reasoning and Analysis, which will launch in February of 2017. Our vision for these advanced courses is to offer students more practice in analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. We also envision that students in these advanced courses will create a summative quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods project—something that will be directly applicable to their capstone at Walden.

Within each course, we are working closely with an advisory council to get feedback from various disciplines on what analysis-related skills their students need to be proficient after graduation. That’s been incredibly helpful. Later on this fall, we will present our ideas to the Research Process Advisory Council for their feedback; shortly after that, we’ll present our refined ideas to the Research Curriculum and Academic Policy governance body, where we will seek a formal vote of approval. All of this information sharing will help us create advanced research courses that will address the diverse needs of our students.

We feel very fortunate to work at Walden, in an environment where ideas on research curriculum are so freely and generously shared for the betterment of our students. Thanks to everyone who has given their time and energy in developing these courses, and thanks to you all who have been teaching the curriculum to your students.

Here’s to another great term together!
In addition to her role as the academic champion of the Center for Research Quality’s research courses, Annie serves as the designee to Walden’s Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Eric Riedel, in reviewing and approving all capstone studies. She also serves as the academic champion of the doctoral capstone resources website and is the one-voice writer for the Walden’s assurance argument in the university’s upcoming reaffirmation of accreditation within the Higher Learning Commission.

Validating Qualitative Interview Guides

Marydee Spillett, EdD
Associate Director and Qualitative Methodologist

One of the common inquiries that I receive from faculty and students concerns the recommended procedure for “validating” a qualitative interview guide.

It is important to consider that an external review of an interview guide does not necessarily result in a "valid" instrument because, in qualitative research, "the researcher is the instrument." Interview questions do not stand alone like a written survey or questionnaire. When researchers conduct open-ended or semi-structured interviews, they are active conversation partners who play a major role in generating the data. The concept of a “valid instrument” is not quite the same in qualitative research as in quantitative research.

It can be helpful to have external expert reviews of a qualitative interview guide in order to consider whether the interview questions are worded in a neutral manner, are open-ended, and flow in a logical manner, as well as to consider how the guide affords opportunity to discuss the necessary topics or sub-topics related to the research questions. For these purposes, several different experts could provide reviews: qualitative methodology experts who are familiar with conducting interviews as well as subject matter experts who are familiar with the literature on the topic.

Beyond the interview guide, it is good practice for qualitative interviewers to ask spontaneous follow-up questions that are based on the interviewee’s responses. These spontaneous follow-up questions are an essential component of how the researcher generates depth and richness in qualitative data collection. In addition, conducting effective interviews involves forming an interpersonal partnership between the researcher and the interviewee. Active listening is also an essential skill for qualitative interviewers.

There is much more to conducting an effective qualitative interview beyond the interview guide. An external review of the interview guide would not address the quality, neutrality, or outcome of the interview and would not account for any researcher influence that might have been present during the conduct of the interview.
Given this, it is important for qualitative researchers to develop their individual skills as interviewers. It can be useful when novice researchers have the opportunity to engage in critical reflection on practice interviews to become aware of possible researcher bias and to improve active listening skills. The qualities, skills, and self-awareness of the researcher are essential to generating rich, in-depth qualitative data.

Along with being an associate director, in her capacity as qualitative methodology advisor, Marydee provides methodological consultation to faculty via the MethodologyAdvice@waldenu.edu email account and to students via the Methodology Advice Office Hours. She also attends PhD residencies to provide methodological advising to students. Marydee has been with Walden for 11 years, six in the CRQ.

When Apparently, Everything is Not Awesome

Matt Jones, PhD
Methodologist, Core Faculty

Despite the mantra from *The Lego® Movie* that “everything is awesome”, there is a current dialogue that a crisis exists in research. I just returned from the American Statistical Association Annual Meeting where the discussion continued about the reproducibility crisis. I don’t have the room in this article to do justice to this conversation, but in short, the dialogue concerns modern science’s lack of ability to reproduce the majority of findings from previous studies. If you haven’t been following this story, you can use your favorite web search engine and plenty of recent publications will pop on the first page. Engber (2016) is a popular press article recently receiving a lot of attention that goes into some detail describing this crisis, and Nosek (2015) is receiving a fair amount of credit for providing evidence of weak study replications.

Whether an actual crisis exists is something we can debate, but I certainly see this conversation as an opportunity. First, whereas in the past, replication studies were considered unoriginal, they are increasingly now viewed as providing a genuine contribution to modern science by adding to the greater body of knowledge. There has even been a recent call for Ph.D. students to conduct a replication study before the award of the degree (Woolston, 2015). I am not sure if such an approach is a good idea or not, but in one of my graduate school classes I was asked to try and replicate the results of a recently published study — using the same data — and it was a fantastic learning experience (I was never able to replicate the results, by the way).

Second, “the crisis” draws attention to the field of conducting research on the research process itself (meta-research). The METRICS project out of Stanford University is doing some neat work in this area that might assist with
bolstering the research process. Lastly, journals are increasingly requiring authors of accepted articles to make their data available on the journal websites. The American Economic Association’s journals have had a data availability policy for some time. Why am I excited about this? Not only does it provide increased transparency in the scientific process, but it also allows for another possibility for the use of those data in secondary analyses. In the past, researchers have sometimes been secretive and protective of their data, but now another possible avenue for obtaining data for secondary analysis exists. Increased data availability is an exciting opportunity for our students to understand that previously collected and published data is available to them. It also provides a great opportunity for mentors to have discussions about ethics and the process of research. So, while some see the sky falling, I see increased transparency as a chance for the continued advancement of science. If you have any thoughts on this topic, contact me at matthew.jones2@waldenu.edu

Matt has been with Walden University since 2009 and most recently serves as a methodology advisor in the CRQ. He also mentors PhD students in the School of Public Policy and Administration. His background is in systems simulation and applied research and analysis. When not acting as a methodological provocateur, he enjoys research in the philosophy of statistics and sociology of science.

Supporting Survey Research

Sunny Liu, PhD
Quantitative Methodologist

Guides Offer Researchers Help Designing, Administering, and Analyzing Surveys from Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

Through our methodology advising services and the office hours, we often have faculty and students asking us questions about survey design, administration, or modifications. Although survey is a common data collection method, many researchers do not have the training or experience needed to design surveys or analyze the data that surveys can provide. To fill this gap, three research alliances in the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northeast and Islands region asked the REL to develop guides to help them design, administer, and analyze survey data in their schools, districts, and states.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) released the new Survey Methods for Educators guides in August. The guides provide clear information that describe how to:

- Develop and adapt surveys (part 1)
- Select a sample of potential respondents and administer surveys (part 2).
- Analyze and report survey data (part 3).
Within each part, there are also several steps outlined to provide detailed, real-world examples of how they have been used in REL research alliance projects. It is important to point out that the information presented in the guides can be applied in other discipline although they are targeted at educators. Read all three guides at:

If you have methodology related questions, please contact us through the MethodologyAdvice@Waldenu.edu role account or refer your students to attend our methodology office hours.

* Sunny is the quantitative methodology expert in the CRQ. Her research interests include quantitative and mixed-method research design, advanced statistics, and longitudinal data analysis using large national representative samples. Sunny has years of experiences in teaching research method courses and serving in dissertation committees.

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**Time to Update SPSS**

Please remember that all students and faculty will need to enter an updated access code on **September 30th** to re-authenticate their SPSS license. More information and instructions can be found on SPSS page of the CRQ site.