Greetings from the Executive Director | Laura Knight Lynn

Dear Colleagues,

I hope your summer is off to a productive start. As you will see in this issue of re:Research, we at the Center for Research Quality (CRQ) have the opportunity to collaborate and implement some exciting initiatives. Key emphases for the center this year are increased student preparation for capstone work and enhanced training for capstone committees. Much of what we share here aligns with these efforts.

Targeted Trainings

Using what we have learned from our doctoral capstone data and input from the Research Process Advisory Council, we have a variety of targeted trainings for URRs and committee members (discussed in this newsletter). Of particular importance are guidance to help strengthen mentoring skills, better understanding of committee roles, and specific strategies to bolster student progress. Under Deborah Inman’s leadership in collaboration with CFE, there is strong investment in helping our faculty be successful in guiding quality doctoral capstones at a distance.

Upcoming Programs

We are looking forward to the upcoming faculty meeting and graduation where we will have a research symposium with an emphasis on usage of secondary data. Additionally, there will be special training sessions focused on helping faculty strengthen work on capstone committees. Virtual versions of these sessions will be held in the fall. We are also pleased to support our new doctoral graduates on their path to scholarship through the New Scholars Workshop. Under Daniel Salter’s leadership with support of some of our best faculty scholars, new graduates get critical information and inspiration for a professional life of writing and research beyond the dissertation.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter and find the updates useful. Feel free to reach out to me with any comments, feedback or suggestions at CRQ@waldenu.edu. Thanks for all you do to support our students.

Sincerely,

Laura
CRQ Sessions at Summer Faculty Meeting 2016 | Daniel Salter

The CRQ will be contributing to the Summer National Faculty Meeting in National Harbor, MD, in a number of ways. Most of these sessions will be reprised later and archived eventually, but we thought you’d like some previews:

**Faculty Development Sessions**

*Supporting Substantive Student Progress in Doctoral Capstone Programs*

The purpose of this session is to share best practices of successful mentoring of doctoral students, to explore issues related to substantive student progress, and to identify strategies for resolving barriers to student success.

Presenters: Laura Lynn, Deborah Inman, Lee Stadtlander, Walter McCollum, Tony Ajsenberg, Andy Kermode, Mary Deering, Maria Jaworski, and Alex Dohm

*Tools and Resources to Support Faculty Working with Doctoral Capstone Students*

The purpose of this session is to identify tools and resources to support faculty working with doctoral capstone students. This will include sharing best practices of successful mentoring of doctoral students using technology to enhance doctoral capstone experiences to promote substantive progress. Resources will be identified to support faculty to engage students using more technology.

Presenters: Laura Lynn, MaryFriend Carter, and Steven Case.

**Research Symposium**

A Walden University tradition for several years, the Research Symposium highlights research by selected members of the academic community using two different formats. The *poster* format gives researchers a chance to engage with all individuals attending the symposium and to network with other interested researchers. The 42 poster presentations at this symposium will include ones from individual faculty and research teams, as well as many of our graduates.

Using a *roundtable* format, three researchers will be available for interactive discussions of their work, as aligned to this summer’s theme *Creative Solutions to Research Challenges*. We will also be hosting a Meet & Greet with the editors of our five Walden-sponsored academic journals and a representative for the Research Dissemination Support (RDS) Program (see article below). Questions? researchsymposium@waldenu.edu
New Scholars Workshop

We will also be offering New Scholars Workshop sessions on Thursday, July 14th, 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. Questions? NSW@waldenu.edu

Mentoring Support and Professional Development Opportunities

Deborah Inman
Laurie Bedford, Center for Faculty Excellence

Over the past couple of years, Walden University leadership has collaborated with college leadership and faculty members across the university identifying needs for doctoral faculty support to further promote student progress. Mentoring doctoral students at Walden University is an important faculty expectation.

Although the committee chair is the primary mentor to the student, the chair and the committee member work together to guide students in the development of skills needed to practice at the doctoral level. The university research reviewer (URR) also plays a role working with committees to ensure quality assurance and student success. Walden University recognizes the critical role of the faculty mentor and has implemented a number of initiatives to support faculty, students, and staff. A key component of support to faculty includes professional development and engagement opportunities.

These support and engagement opportunities have been purposefully planned in response to faculty requests and suggestions. In general, overarching goals and institutional acumen related to the capstone processes have not changed. Rather, the faculty support and engagement opportunities are intended to clarify expectations, enhance tools and guidelines for working with students, and provide support to faculty in decision making and collaboration.

A number of professional development opportunities aligned with university initiatives to support students and faculty have been offered over the past few months. Webinars presented to date have focused on topics including satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading guidelines in the capstone courses, clarification of committee roles, orientation to the doctoral capstone, clarification of committee compensation, and the IAP process. These webinars and supporting documents have resulted in the availability of resources to
faculty for on-demand access and ongoing support. Faculty mentors can review the archived webinars and access materials on the faculty resources tab of the faculty portal.

As the University continues to focus on support, engagement, and collaboration among faculty mentors and students; additional initiatives are being developed. Upcoming webinars over the summer will include updated presentations of:

- Supporting Substantive Student Progress in Doctoral Capstone Programs
- Committee Roles and Best Practices
- Engaging URRs with Committees

**Methodology Advice Office Hours for Students | Marydee Spillett**

The Center for Research Quality (CRQ) provides office hours to answer student questions about designing and conducting dissertation or doctoral study research. Students are welcome to attend at any time during the research design or implementation process.

Office hours provide an informal, drop-in setting in a group advising format, using the Adobe Connect platform. Students may ask questions and receive advice about designing or conducting qualitative or quantitative research studies.

During the Qualitative Methodology Advice Office Hours, common topics of discussion include: qualitative research questions, qualitative research designs, participant selection, interview questions and other data collection methods, data analysis methods, and writing up qualitative results.

During the Quantitative Methodology Advice Office Hours, common questions include: sample size and power analysis, research questions/hypotheses, quantitative research designs, data collection methods/instrumentation, data analysis methods, and statistics reporting.

The Methodology Advice Office Hours are hosted by CRQ methodology advisors Matt Jones, Sunny Liu, and Marydee Spillett. Faculty are encouraged to refer students to the Methodology Advice Office Hours for assistance. Dates and times vary and are posted monthly on the Center for Research Quality website.
Revised URR Training | Deborah Inman

Announcing the Launch of the Revised URR Faculty Training Course

We are very pleased to announce the launch of the revised University Research Reviewer (URR) training course scheduled for June 27, 2016. We would like to thank the subject matter experts (SMEs) for this course revision; Marydee Spillett, Michelle Brown, Bill Barkley, Tammy Root, Wendy Andberg, Elisha Gali, and a special thanks to Kristy Wake for her creative instructional design efforts and guidance throughout the process. We believe this revised URR training course will be useful not only to new faculty who meet the requirements to serve in this role and are recommended by their programs to take this training and serve as a URR but also to current URRs as well. The revised course is conducted over three weeks instead of the current two weeks and includes new information and/or assignments about MyDR procedures, building collaborative relationships between URRs and chairs, and Walden resources.


Managed by the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs the Research Dissemination Support (RDS) program is intended to support faculty and staff who promote the visibility and scholarly reputation of Walden University through the dissemination of research and research-related activities conducted by Walden University faculty.

The RDS program offers two types of grant awards:

- **Publication RDS** – provides an award for publishing research and research-related activities. The Publication RDS is issued after the publication has been published.

- **Presentation RDS** – provides travel support (i.e., costs associated with conference attendance: conference registration/fees, travel, and lodging/accommodation) for presenting research and research-related activities at local, national, and international professional conferences. The Presentation RDS may be applied for and conferred prior to conference attendance, although disbursement of funds is dependent upon submission of travel-related receipts.

Details about the RDS program and how to apply are available on the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs website, which is housed in the Center for Research Quality. An overview of revisions to RDS program continues on the next page.
Revisions for 2016

Following are revisions to specific sections of the RDS program that have been implemented for 2016:

Eligibility

- Presentations that are given after December 1\textsuperscript{st} may be submitted for consideration in either the December cycle of the current RDS program year or the February RDS program cycle of the following year.
  - Applications for December presentations must be received by the February application deadline – February 1\textsuperscript{st}.
  - RDS applications for December presentations will not be accepted for any other RDS program cycles.

Grant Amount: Publication RDS

- Only one Publication RDS is awarded per book or journal volume, regardless of the number of chapters or articles the applicant has published in a given book or journal volume.

Application Process: Publication RDS

- Item #5: Link to the article at journal website.
  - If the article/book was not published online or information about the publication is not available online, please provide a copy of the publication abstract.

- Item #6: Evidence that your affiliation with Walden appears on the publication.
  - The website link to the title page or the “about the author” page of the publication.
  - If the article/book was not published online or information about the publication is not available online, please provide a copy of the title page or the “about the author” page of the publication.

Application Process: Presentation RDS

- Item #5: Link to the abstract for your presentation at conference website.
  - If your abstract is not available online, please provide a copy of your presentation abstract.

- Item #6: Evidence that your affiliation with Walden is associated with the presentation.
  - The website link to the conference program, which lists your Walden affiliation.
  - If the conference program was not published online, please provide a copy of the page(s) of the conference program that lists your Walden affiliation.

Questions about these revision and the RDS program in general should be directed to grants@waldenu.edu.
The Continuing Discussion of \textit{p}-values | Matt Jones

In case you haven’t heard, there was a vigorous conversation among statisticians and philosophers of statistics (yes, there is such a thing) last year regarding our good old friend, the \textit{p}-value. This conversation, spearheaded by the American Statistical Association (ASA), resulted in a formal statement from the organization to define the \textit{p}-value and more specifically, draw attention to \textit{what it is not}. The purpose of this statement is an attempt to reduce prevalent misinterpretations—in particular in the social sciences—of the \textit{p}-value.

The storm of discussions after this release was quite active in a variety of blogs, social media, and even mainstream media. Yet, this conversation is really not new. Statisticians, researchers, and philosophers have debated what the \textit{p}-value actually means since Sir Ronald Fisher first started writing about the concept. As time progressed, somehow the interpretation of the \textit{p}-value was expanded far beyond the scope of what it can actually tell us; probably because Fisher’s \textit{p}-value and Neyman-Pearson’s alpha are often confused and intertwined, but that’s a story for another day (see Hubbard’s 2011 article on this for a discussion).

Many journal editors, statisticians and other \textit{p} value fans stand strongly pointing a finger at social scientists for their bastardization of the concept. In some sense, they are correct. But, who can blame us? Our social science methods and data analysis textbooks are rife with incorrect definitions. Although the \textit{p}-value does provide some useful information, more often than not, it doesn’t provide the specific information the social scientist really wants to know. So it was somehow adopted into a measure of what we wanted it to be, even though it never would be able to live up to this expectation.

Those of you who have had the misfortune of speaking to me at some point (or some of your students) have already been subjected to my thoughts about the \textit{p}-value. Now I have the opportunity to use the ASA statements as evidence to support some of my more recent ramblings. Speaking of which, let’s cut to the chase and actually report what the ASA published.

The ASA (Wallerstein & Lazar, 2016) defined the \textit{p}-value in the following manner:

\begin{quote}
Informally, a \textit{p}-value is the probability under a specified statistical model that a statistical summary of the data (for example, the sample mean difference between two compared groups) would be equal to or more extreme than its observed value. (p. 8)
\end{quote}

Really, this definition is not new or \textit{avant-garde}; it is one that has existed in the statistical literature for some time, although with some slightly different language. How competing, incorrect definitions arose is something with which sociologists can help us.
The ASA went on to offer the five following statements:

1. _p_-values do not measure the probability that the studied hypothesis is true, or the probability that the data were produced by random chance alone.
2. Scientific conclusions and business or policy decisions should not be based only on whether a _p_-value passes a specific threshold.
3. Proper inference requires full reporting and transparency.
4. A _p_-value, or statistical significance, does not measure the size of an effect or the importance of a result.
5. By itself, a _p_-value does not provide a good measure of evidence regarding a model or hypothesis.

Statement 1, by far, is one of the most common definitions of the _p_-value in social science literature (and remember, the ASA is stating this is an incorrect decision). It is often described as the probability the null is true, a specific measure of the probability chance produced the data, or even flipping it around by stating something like, “There is a 95% chance I am right in this decision.” For those of who are fans of formal notation, this means we have flipped the correct definition from _P(D | H_0)_ to _P(H_0 | D)_ The latter is often what we actually want to know, but more suited to methods that can utilize posterior probabilities of the truth of a hypothesis (i.e., more in line with Bayesian thinking).

If you are confused at this point, don’t feel like you are the only one. Some well-respected, high profile statisticians have recently commented that trying to truly understand what the _p_-value actually means is somewhat challenging. Previous research has demonstrated that well over 70% of sampled research methods professors interpret the _p_-value using one of the fallacious definitions (Falk & Greenbaum, 1995; Haller & Krauss, 2002; Oakes, 1986).

I only have so much room to discuss this issue here, but if you are interested you might check out Carver’s (1978) foundational critiques. Rex Kline has also been working on this issue for a long time, attempting to correct misconceptions. Additionally, Raymond Hubbard’s recent work along with acclaimed statisticians Andrew Gelman and Steve Greenland—both key discussants for the ASA statement—are other great sources. You can also do your own research into what the ASA is calling the “post _p_ < .05 era”!

**Resources**


