Greetings from the Executive Director | Laura Knight Lynn

Dear Colleagues,

I’m hoping everyone has had peaceful holidays with their loved ones. We are excited to bring you this issue of re:Research, as many new doctoral support initiatives are underway and as we prepare for an exciting program at the Winter National Faculty Meeting this January.

Capstone Resources for Doctoral Students

In this issue we emphasize important resources to help your students make progress in their dissertations and doctoral studies. Resources such as methodology office hours, secondary data resources on the Center for Research Quality (CRQ) website, and capstone writing workshops can directly impact your students’ research understanding and progress. Methodology Advisors Sunny Lui, Marydee Spillett, and Matt Jones summarize their experiences, and Jenny Sherer provides reminders of the variety of resources available to assist students in identifying a data source and working with secondary.

Beyond these CRQ resources, The Walden Center for Student Success offers non-degree proposal revision writing workshops for doctoral candidates who are working with a draft of their proposals. In these 6-week, online, small-group workshops students will work on revising and editing their proposal drafts by receiving instruction, feedback, and support from their instructor and peers. These workshops are available for both quarter- and semester-based students, and the workshop schedule is available on the Academic Skills Center’s site.

Supporting Faculty Research Mentors

We are pleased to have some exciting professional development opportunities for faculty at the Winter Faculty Meeting. We will have sessions on the role of the URR and guidance and tips for using MyDR with your students. Additionally, we will hold a research colloquium featuring scholars who have piloted innovative approaches using social media in the education process.

Thank you in advance for reviewing this issue and feel free to reach out to me with any questions and suggestions, at CRQ@waldenu.edu. Thank you for all you do to support research quality and progress with your students.

Sincerely, Laura
The purpose of the Methodology Advice role account service is to provide advice and expertise to faculty in conceptualizing student research projects or faculty research inquiries. The consultants are available to answer faculty questions for those serving on committees, engaged in collaborative research with students, and for faculty members engaged in their own Walden-based research. Consultations are requested by emailing your questions to MethodologyAdvice@Waldenu.edu. Questions will typically be answered within 48 hours of receipt.

We have been providing this service for a few years now, and have been tracking the types of requests we received. During the year from November 2014 to October 2015:

- Half of these requests were for the quantitative method, 33% of them were for the qualitative method, 14% of them were for the general questions, 2% of them were for mixed-method, and 1% of them were for IRB-related questions. For the general questions category, the questions included committee feedback, student not making progress, proposal review, etc.
- Looking at questions about quantitative method specifically, the most common questions were about the appropriate data analysis method for the research studies, followed by research design questions, and then questions regarding instrumentation and sample size.
- Within qualitative questions, the three most common types of requests concerned data analysis, research design/method, and data collection.
- When the requests were examined at the college level, the Riley College of Education and Leadership had the highest number of requests (45%) and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences had the second highest number of requests (35%). Together, these two colleges accounted for 80% of all the requests.

We would like to remind all colleges and faculty of these services.
Resources for Secondary Analysis  |  Jenny Sherer

As students develop their research topics, identifying and making use of available resources can be overwhelming. Students interested in conducting a secondary analysis may consider the use of organizational data, but the question arises about where to look next, if such data are not available. With the multitudes of existing datasets finding the starting point of where to look can be a challenge.

A ready and convenient resource is the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) database. With hundreds of thousands of datasets, researchers can easily search for datasets that may be applicable to their own studies. The site offers multiple research support resources such as training in quantitative literacy, tips on data management, and tutorials on how data can be analyzed and is available to all students and faculty. To get full use of the site, 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.

Your students might be surprised that Google provides one avenue for finding data. Their Datasets Search Engine can be used for this purpose. Although not as elaborate as ICPSR, these customized searches might uncover a dataset that has not been catalogued elsewhere. Additional scrutiny and screening of these datasets would be warranted, of course.

More resources are located on the CRQ website’s Data Resources and Support. In this area researchers will find links to the Social Change Impact Report datasets and to various repositories and tool for secondary analysis. We are continuing to develop these resources; so if you have suggestions or requests, please forward them to the CRQ@waldenu.edu account.

Update on My Doctoral Research (MyDR) | Deborah Inman

In an effort to improve communication regarding MyDR successes and challenges, we have reconfirmed program liaisons, as well as created a MyDR steering committee. The faculty steering committee member represents your college in quarterly meetings where we will provide updates regarding enhancements, common concerns, and efforts to evaluate and improve MyDR.

The program faculty liaison serves as a “go to” faculty member for other faculty in your programs with problems or questions regarding MyDR. The liaison will also reach out to CRQ when there are continuing
concerns or areas where additional support is needed. These roles provide targeted program communication and support and a clear voice on the experience and needs for your program.

**MyDR Liaisons and Steering Committee by Program**

**College of Health Sciences**
- **Peter Anderson**, Steering Committee
- **Tammy Root**, Liaison
- **Steve Bowman**, Liaison

**College of Management and Technology**
- **Sandy Kohlberg**, Liaison and Steering Committee (CMT)
- **Doug Campbell**, Liaison and Steering Committee (DBA)
- **Steve Case**, Liaison (DIT)

**College of Social and Behavioral Sciences**
- **Tracy Marsh**, Steering committee
- **Tony Perry**, Liaison and Steering Committee

**Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership**
- **Michelle Brown**, Steering Committee
- **Paula Dawidowicz**, Liaison and Steering Committee
- **Ramo Lord**, Liaison

**Research Grant Opportunity** | Molly Lauck

**2016 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**
- Core faculty/administrators must have been employed by Walden for a minimum of two years.
- Contributing faculty must have been employed by Walden for a minimum of three years.

**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: **January 26, 2016**
- Walden Semi-finalist announced: **February 8, 2016**
- Wilson Award winners announced: **April 2016**

Information about the 2016 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](http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/internalfunding/resources). Questions about the Wilson Award program should be directed to Dr. Molly Lauck at [grants@waldenu.edu](mailto:grants@waldenu.edu).

**CRQ Sessions at Winter Faculty Meeting 2016** | Daniel Salter

In January 2016, the CRQ will be contributing a number of experiences to the Winter National Faculty Meeting in Orlando, FL. Most of these sessions will be reprised later and archived eventually, but we thought you’d like to have a sense of the offerings.

**Faculty Development Sessions**

*Academic Review Process – Roles and Responsibilities of the University Research Reviewer (URR)*

To provide an overview of the Academic Review process and discuss successful practices in the University Research Reviewer (URR) process. Presented by: **Deborah Inman, Michelle Brown, Bill Barkley, Tammy Root, Elisha Galaif, Wendy Andberg**

*Navigating MyDR: Helpful Tips and Tricks*

The success of students in the MyDR system is largely dependent on their faculty committees knowing the ins-and-outs of MyDR. In this session, faculty will have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the submission and review process in MyDR, as well as learn a few helpful tips and tricks about the
procedures surrounding MyDR submissions and reviews. Some key highlights of the session will include reconciling committee evaluations, understanding how to identify where a student is in the process, the differences between the student and faculty experience within MyDR, and what is expected of each faculty member at the various review stages. Presented by: Tony Ajsenberg, Andy Kermode, Maria Jaworski, Mary Deering

Revitalizing YOUR Research Capacity with Technology

Because Walden University faculty members work so hard at supporting our students’ research efforts, they can sometimes lose touch with their own scholarly agendas. The goal of this session is help you revitalize YOUR research capacity through an exploration new technologies and online strategies that can support your efforts (e.g., maintaining your research presence online, managing the flow of digital information, and strategies for data collection). Demonstrations will be provided, with discussions of researcher development. Presented by: Daniel Salter

Research Colloquium

Social Media Strategies in Higher Education

The Walden University Research Colloquium is an annual event that showcases the scholarship of a select group of faculty researchers. Each year, the session is organized around a theme of interest to the community. The 2016 colloquium will focus on the impact of social media strategies in higher education. This special colloquium will highlight the research and findings of scholars who were supported by the GPS Social Media Grant.

New Scholars Workshop

As has become a tradition, we will be offering New Scholars Workshop sessions on Thursday, January 28th, 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.

Sometimes It’s OK Not To Be Normal | Matt Jones

Over the years, I have seen a number of faculty and students anguish over trying to fit variables that are not normally distributed into ordinary least squares regression models. This suffering is largely in vain as, contrary to urban legend, an assumption of normal distribution of variables does not exist for linear regression. There is not, never has been, and probably never will be an assumption of normal distribution of the independent and dependent variables in regression.

At this point, undoubtedly many readers will pull a social science research methods textbook from the bookshelf that clearly states independent variables
must be normally distributed to properly estimate a regression model (I own a few of these myself). Unfortunately, the prevalence of this misconception seems to propagate through some textbooks and subsequently find its way in the classroom and most unfortunate of all, practice. Don’t feel ashamed if you have spent vast amounts of time doing this in the past or counseled students to take this path, we have all been victim of statistical misconception at one time or another.

The assumption of normality in ordinary least squares regression is directed at the distribution of errors in the population. Because models are an estimate based on a sample, this actual error is rarely, if ever observable. The residuals of the estimated model can be observed though, which can provide some idea of the distribution of errors. Even if the distribution of the residuals deviates from normality, ordinary least squares regression is quite robust against this violation. To induce any further action requiring transformation or resampling methods, the distribution of residuals needs to deviate substantially from normality. Moreover, given the Central Limit Theorem, even a distribution that is not normal will still provide unbiased coefficients as the sampling distribution reaches normality as the sample sizes increase. As such, this assumption is probably at the bottom of the lists of concerns unless the researcher is dealing with small samples—in which case power might become more of an issue. The primary concern with major deviations in residuals is the possible impact on the $p$-value and confidence intervals.

How the rumor of an assumption requiring normal distribution of predictor and outcome variables was started remains a mystery for statistical historians to explore. In the meantime, alleviate student stress (and your own!) by pointing them to a few initial resources that thoroughly repudiate this misconception.

**Resources**


