Greetings from the Executive Director

Laura Knight Lynn, PhD
Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

Mentoring doctoral researchers at a distance presents some unique obstacles and opportunities, but ultimately can be rewarding for both students and faculty members. While some faculty are still finding their footing in translating their own “style” to the online environment, even experienced mentors need periodic refreshers and updates to stay current with processes and policies. As a result, we recognize that a variety of services is needed to help faculty members provide the engaged and accessible mentoring that our students deserve.

A Culture of Engaged Doctoral Research Mentoring

With these thoughts in mind, we are working on enhancing our culture around doctoral mentoring, as well as developing even more resources that support your work. I want to highlight some of the ways we are investing in your success this year:

• The Research Mentoring ProSeminar for new faculty had its first anniversary in January. As they mentor their first doctoral committees at Walden, new faculty members are benefitting from the guidance of senior colleagues and interactions with a cohort of peers.

• As an outgrowth of the Proseminar, a capstone refresher community will be starting this fall. In this community, we will have our most experienced faculty working with peers serving on committees and will offer them access to the training and resources provided to new faculty. The support and connection opportunities will ensure that our existing faculty understand and can apply best practices and current doctoral mentoring expectations. We are working on launching this first support community in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences in September.

• All faculty members working with professional doctorate students will be receiving targeted capstone mentoring modules starting August 8th. In this experience, mentors will get consistent training on Walden policies and expectations, as well as program-specific training relevant to their capstone options. Best practices and current expectations will be shared, and common areas of challenge and confusion will be emphasized. This targeted training is...
especially key for faculty who work with students in both types of degree programs, academic and professional.

- We have also held and will be holding training sessions and webinars at the National Faculty Meeting, and virtually supporting mentoring for student progress and success. These sessions will focus on utilizing an updated term plan and active engagement with doctoral mentees throughout the term.

**Mentoring and Scholarship**

As you review the newsletter, you will see some useful articles that support your research capacity and productivity, thus strengthening your work on committees. Strong, experienced researchers make good mentors for our students and help our students do their best work. As we can see from the data from our Research Dissemination Support Program, our faculty are making a significant contribution to scholarship in their fields of practice. We want to continue to support you in doing your best work as practitioners, scholars, and mentors to the next generation of scholar-practitioners fostering social change.

While we are making some good strides, we also know that more is needed. So, we will continue to seek input from the faculty community as we work to provide guidance, clarity, and resources to help you do your best mentoring and committee service. Much of what has been developed has grown from the ideas and examples from our strongest, experienced mentors. If you have additional ideas or suggestions to share, please contact us at CRQ@mail.waldenu.edu. We would love to hear what you are doing.

Thank you for reviewing this newsletter and for the work you do for our students every day.

Laura

**Disseminating Your Research**

**Daniel Salter, PhD**  
**Director, Strategic Research Initiatives**

In the last edition of our newsletter, I highlighted the various services and programs across the academic centers that support *conducting* research. Now, I want to focus on resources for *disseminating* that research.

**Services Through the CRQ**

As is the case with all the centers, most of the services and programs that are available through the CRQ to our researchers-in-training, are also available to faculty and staff who conduct research. A few are focused more on faculty and staff, as highlighted below.
Services Through the Writing Center

- APA formatting resources. General resources on APA Style (e.g., citations, references, other style guidelines).
- Writing for publication resources. General resources on writing for publication or presenting at a conference, as well as links to other Walden departments.
- Post-graduation/Faculty Capstone Publication Kit. Resources on publishing all or part of a dissertation.
- Faculty Prepulation and Grant Proposal Review - In this new cooperative service provided by editors in the Writing Center, faculty members are offered feedback on prepublication manuscripts and grant proposals. The goal is to serve as an editor and a second reader to provide edits and suggestions. This feedback can focus on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and line editing, as well as voice, cohesion and flow, clarity in presentation, and other aspects of writing, as specified by the faculty member.

Services through the Academic Skills Center.

- Resources for use of various software packages (e.g., SPSS and Word), in case a refresher is needed.

Library Support

Be sure to read Susan Stekel's article herein that discusses guides for evaluating journals, using journal metrics, and identifying reputable journals.

Funding for Research Dissemination

- Research Dissemination Support (RDS) program – supports faculty and staff in their efforts to disseminate research outside of Walden.
- COS Pivot (Community of Science Pivot) – provides a range of services that support research, including identifying possible outlets.

On-going Programs

Here are some of the key programs that provide opportunities for scholars to share their work with the Walden community.

- Faculty Development Sessions – Twice a year, the Center for Faculty Excellence issues a call for presenters at the National Faculty Meeting (NFM), which is a great opportunity for sharing practice-based research.
- Research Colloquium (Winter NFM, only) – Highlights the scholarship of a select group of researchers, typically around a theme. In January, we heard presentations by the first group of fellows in the Center for Social Change.
- Research Symposium (Summer NFM, only) – We are ramping up now for the next symposium in July. This link will take you to an archive of posters and programs from previous years. The event showcases research by faculty, staff, alumni, and our newest graduates.

Walden University also hosts five, diamond-open-access research journals for the benefit of scholars in those respective disciplines. Watch for more detail on each of them in our Fall edition of re:research.
2018 Presidential Research Fellowship Program

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

**Kristina Harris, DBA**
Associate Director

The Presidential Research Fellowship program offers two grant programs to support research:

- **The Don E. Ackerman Research Fellowship in Educational Leadership**
- **The Research Fellowship in Distance Education**

Faculty, staff, and students are eligible to apply for these fellowships, although students intending to use the fellowship funds to support their doctoral capstone research should be nearing the point of defending their research proposal when they apply. While only research proposals that are determined to be of exceptional scholarly merit will be funded, in an effort to recognize newly emerging scholars, proposals submitted by students will be considered for funding from a separate pool.

Researchers are encouraged to request only the amount of funds needed to conduct their proposed research activities, rather than the maximum amount available. The number of fellowships awarded in each funding level will be determined by the quality and size of the applicant pool as well as the availability of program funds.

**Faculty/Staff Research Proposals**

- **$8,000** funding ceiling for collaborative or single investigator authored research proposals.

  **Note:** Students may be included in the research team, but the team must be led by faculty or staff members, and the research cannot be based upon the student's doctoral capstone.

**Student Research Proposals**

- **$1,000** funding ceiling for research conducted by a single student.
- The research proposed by students must be based upon their doctoral capstone research.
- Up to two fellowships may be awarded, depending upon availability of program funds.

Applicants are encouraged to identify the one fellowship that best aligns with their research goals and apply to that fellowship only, rather than submitting proposals to both fellowship opportunities.
Program Timeline

- September 10, 2018: Application Deadline
- October 15, 2018: Fellowship recipients announced

Questions: grants@mail.waldenu.edu

IRB Office Hours and Partner Site Questions

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

As many of you are aware, the IRB provides office hours during which students (and faculty) can discuss issues related to the ethical protection of participants, brainstorm possible solutions for how to resolve potential barriers, or even just listen and learn from other students. However, office hours can also be a great opportunity for students to ask questions and obtain clarification about what site documentation may be needed for their capstone studies.

Students partner with research sites for various reasons- perhaps there is a local problem unique to that organization, maybe it has a specified dataset, or possibly it is an opportunity to connect with individuals that meet the study inclusion criteria. These partnerships allow students to conduct their studies with organizations who can directly benefit from the results of the research and potentially use the results to make improvements.

Yet, with all the advantages of partnering with an organization, determining whether and what site documentation may be needed can be an overwhelming process for students. The list of questions develops quickly, leading to a quagmire in which students feel stuck as they try to sort out what they need to know. Resolving these questions is where attending IRB office hours can help. In discussing what the study will involve and what the role of the site will be, the IRB can provide specific feedback for the particular study. In better understanding what will be required, students can be better prepared when they seek site approval and potentially minimize inaccurate or unnecessary paperwork.

Information about when IRB office hours are offered and how to attend is available on the Research Ethics section of the Center for Research Quality website.
URR Engagement on Capstone Committees

Michelle Brown, EdD
Associate Director, Progress and Completion Initiatives

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

Based on feedback from the University Research Review (URR) presentation at the last National Faculty Meeting (NFM) and to provide consistent guidance related to early engagement of the URR member on capstone committees, the Center for Research Quality recently hosted a meeting for all URR Leads to review the NFM materials and to answer any questions. The objectives for the NFM session were to explore the role of the URR member on capstone committees and provide suggested practices for early engagement.

Following this meeting, both the NFM presentation PPT and a document related to URR early engagement practices are now included on the Center for Research Quality’s URR website, University Research Review Process: Documents & Resources. The main URR page includes the URR purpose and primary support documents. Also included now is a link to Faculty Resources for URR members. To access the faculty resources site, faculty will need to log in using their university credentials.

Peer Debriefing

Marydee Spillett, EdD
Associate Director and Qualitative Methodologist

Evidence for Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

In peer debriefing, researchers meet with one or more impartial colleagues in order to critically review the implementation and evolution of their research methods. The role of the peer debriefer in qualitative research is to facilitate the researcher's reflection on methodological activities and provide feedback concerning the effectiveness of the researcher's data collection and data analysis procedures.

The ultimate purpose of peer debriefing, contended Lincoln and Guba (1985), is to enhance the credibility, or truth value, of a qualitative study, by providing "an external check on the inquiry process" (p. 301). Peer debriefers can promote
a reflective dialogue that challenges researchers to clarify their views and uncover the ways in which their beliefs and values play out in the research.

The final report should explain the process and outcomes of peer debriefing so that the reader can assess the evidence of trustworthiness for the study. The following questions might be addressed:

- **Who:** Who were the peer debriefers? What kind of perspectives or expertise did they bring to the research? How did the characteristics of the peer debriefers balance the skills or values of the researcher?

- **When:** How many peer debriefing sessions were held? Over what time span? How long was each session? At what stage in the research process did the debriefings begin?

- **What and How:** What specific aspects of the research process (e.g., sampling) were discussed? What concrete products (e.g., analytical materials) did the peer debriefer review? How did the peer debriefers dialogue with the researcher about how the researcher's subjectivity affected the research?

- **Outcomes:** What did the researcher change as a result of the peer debriefing process? Were there any emergent methodological decisions (e.g., when to stop collecting data) and how were these reached? What was the nature of the relationship between the peer debriefer and the researcher? In what ways did peer debriefing activities enable the researcher to become aware of and explain their effects on the research? In this section of the report, it is particularly effective to walk readers through an example or two of an important decision, change, or realization resulting from the peer debriefing sessions.

Peer debriefing can be a means to enhance the credibility of the research results. However, as Maxwell (1996) explained, "The validity of your results is not guaranteed by following some prescribed procedure.... Validity threats are made implausible by evidence, not methods; methods are only a way of getting evidence that can help you rule out these threats" (p. 86). Thus, simply engaging in peer debriefing does not automatically result in a more valid study. Peer debriefing may be done well or poorly, effectively or ineffectively, depending on the particular research context.

**Note:** I will be convening some “peer debriefing groups” for doctoral students who are currently collecting and analyzing data. Interested students may contact me for further information at marydee.spillet@mail.waldenu.edu

**References**


Guidance on Capstone Abstracts

Deborah Inman, EdD
Director, Office of Research Quality Management

Michelle Brown, EdD
Associate Director, Progress and Completion Initiatives

Jan Garfield, PhD, CQE
Director, Capstone Innovation and Assessment

Arfe Ozcan, PhD
Methodology Advisor

As we plan once again for Commencement and work diligently to support students in the final stages of earning their doctoral degrees, we want to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of the capstone abstract and review process.

The abstract review is an especially important component of the review process for all doctoral work conducted at Walden University. Each abstract is reviewed by the chief academic officer (CAO), or a designee of the CAO, as the final stage in the university review process for all doctoral capstones, and this approval triggers conferral of the doctoral degree.

The abstract needs to indicate that students have a thorough understanding of their study by presenting a concise and logically connected explanation of the research from presenting the focus of the study through the implications for social change.

The required elements of the abstract are included in the Abstract Guidelines document, with more detailed information provided in the Abstract Primer. Both resources are available on the Center for Research Quality’s webpage Research Resources: Research Planning & Writing.

Specific Guidance on Masking Content

To avoid delays in abstract approval, please ensure that students use the appropriate capstone template, include all items from the Abstract Guidelines, and ensure that students mask the identification of participants, the partner site, organization, and/or location. The default should always be to mask the site; therefore, without an approved rationale for site identification, final documents will be returned for revisions if this information is included.
In addition, students should be reminded to avoid including any site identifiers in their capstone document appendices. Items such as recruitment letters, program brochures or letterhead, consent/assent forms, IRB approval letters, and site permission letters should not be included in final capstone documents. These supporting documents may be important at the proposal stage, however, but need to be removed from the document before it goes into ProQuest and ScholarsWorks.

**Library Guide to Academic Publishing**

Susan Stekel  
Library Information Literacy & Instruction Manager

While the landscape of academic publishing is evolving rapidly, peer-reviewed journals remain the most desirable sources for disseminating and locating scholarly research. Unfortunately, some publishers exploit the pressure to publish-or-perish. They act unethically – claiming a peer-review process is in place for their journal when it is not — and/or require payment for publication without transparency or clarity about the fee. This situation leaves authors struggling to determine which journals are worthy of consideration as publishing venues, and leaves libraries scrambling to assess what journals should be in their collections.

So how to discern the good journals from the questionable ones? The Walden Library has prepared a guide on Academic Publishing, including advice on identifying good publishers for your area of research, understanding journal metrics and indexes, and points to consider before submitting work. Use this guide alongside the research resources provided by CRQ to get the confidence and support that you need to disseminate your work.

**Faculty Sessions at the July 2018 National Faculty Meeting**

Deborah Inman, EdD  
Director, Office of Research Quality Management

Michelle Brown, EdD  
Associate Director, Progress and Completion Initiatives

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

The Center for Research Quality will be contributing to three sessions at the upcoming National Faculty Meeting (NFM) in Minneapolis. Two sessions are interrelated in that they provide an overview of the updated dissertation course that will be launched this fall, along with a discussion on mentoring doctoral
learners through the capstone process using the updated term plan document that aligns to the revamped course. The third session addresses development of faculty and staff research capacity and productivity.

**Break-out Session Presentation | 8:00 – 9:00**

**Title | Dissertation Course Update*  
Facilitators | Josh Saunders, Jennifer Verbiar, and Deborah Inman  
Description | In August 2018, the newly updated dissertation course will be launched. The facilitators of this session will present (a) the background and rationale for the dissertation course update, (b) the benefits to both doctoral students and faculty, and (c) a live demonstration of the course in Blackboard.

*The Center for Research Quality, working with the leadership of Josh Saunders and Jennifer Verbiar, along with input from Research Process Advisory Council (RPAC) and Research Curriculum and Academic Policy (RCAP) groups, Darci Harland, and others have developed an update of the dissertation course shell for doctoral candidates in our PhD programs.

**Academic Centers Innovation Updates | 9:15-10:15**

**Topic | Mentoring Doctoral Learners Through the Capstone Process and the Term Plan Update*  
Facilitators | Laura Lynn, Bill Barkley, Sandy Kolberg, Amy Sickel, Deborah Inman, and Michelle Brown  
Description | Based on successful practices of Walden faculty, the Center for Research Quality (CRQ) and the Research Process Advisory Council (RPAC) partnered in the development of an 11-Week Term Plan to (a) better assist and support students’ progress and program completion; (b) provide additional guidance to students on term planning, term-to-term planning, and long-range planning; (c) align with the updated dissertation course shell; (d) strengthen the connection between term plans and IAPs; (e) improve clarity, consistency, and accountability; and (f) provide a flexible term plan format to meet individual committee needs. Session facilitators will guide discussion on mentoring doctoral learners through the capstone process including the role of the chair, term planning, and grading.

*The CRQ and RPAC members have collaborated to address needed enhancements for the term/quarter plan with input from RCAP members and faculty who have been successful with various strategies incorporated into the term/quarter plan – join us to learn more about this innovative approach to supporting doctoral capstones.

**Topic | How Do I get Research Done at Walden?  
Facilitators | Molly Lauck, Kelly Chermack, Michelle Hajder, and Laurie Bedford  
Description | Walden University encourages our faculty to engage in research. To support faculty members in their scholarly endeavors, we offer a variety of resources and opportunities. These include support for research
design, data collection, ethics, literature reviews, writing, funding, and dissemination. In this panel discussion, representatives from the Center for Research Quality (CRQ), the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), and the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) will facilitate a discussion about how faculty members can access and use Walden University resources to further their research agenda.

If you are able to attend NFM, we hope that you can join us for these informative sessions. If not, we will be making efforts to reprise them later, as appropriate.