

Dear Advisors of SOM MS or PHD Student with anticipated defenses this semester,

Given the university's response to COVID-19 including advice regarding social distancing and guidelines for teleworking, all MS and PHD defenses should be held via remote format as of Monday, 3/23.

Thereafter, defenses will continue via remote format for the foreseeable future. There are several key points to keep in mind:

- Students are encouraged to use Zoom for remote conferencing for defenses. More information is available on VCU's [Continue Learning](#) page. Also, I've put together basic guidance on scheduling and hosting Zoom meetings on the [Student Resource page](#) (scroll to 'Resources for Graduate Students' and then 'Graduate Student Degree Completion' and click 'Zoom meeting guidance').
- Students are encouraged to present their seminars and defend their theses/dissertations from remote locations. Importantly, students, audience members, advisors and graduate advisory committee members should not physically be in the same rooms for defenses.
- Required forms and other information for defenses will be sent to the chairs of the graduate advisory committees via email by Harold Greenwald.
- Paper forms to indicate committee member pass/fail voting on defenses need to be signed, scanned and emailed to Harold Greenwald OR the voting can be recorded and communicated via email by the committee chair to Harold Greenwald with cc to all Graduate Advisory Committee members.

A related message was sent to graduate students. Please discuss with your graduate students and reach out to the relevant graduate program director or my office if you have questions. I thank you for your patience and flexibility during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Mike Grotewiel, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Graduate Education
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