

RE: COVID-19: Graduate Student Update



Dear Graduate Student Colleagues,

While the challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic have affected all of us in our professional and personal activities, I particularly want to thank you for your professionalism and resilience. Our dedicated team of Graduate Education Office leaders, program directors, course directors and advisors have collaborated to make the necessary adjustments to graduate studies during this unprecedented time. Continuing your education in the safest way possible has been the paramount driver of these efforts. You have all been so supportive. My heartfelt thanks go out to each of you. I also want to thank those of you who have defended your theses and dissertations under these unprecedented circumstances and my thanks go to you and your mentors and advisers for enabling this to continue. The progression of your career and academic work is a source of pride to all of us.

As you may know, our university's commencement is cancelled and we are exploring the possibility of honoring our graduates through a virtual advanced degree recognition ceremony. Dr. Grotewiel and his team are working hard on that possibility and will keep you apprised of their plans.

Even with being remote from us, remember you are part of a proud community of researchers contributing in important ways to our current health crisis. Recently, VCU announced its participation in a [clinical trial](#) on an experimental treatment for the novel coronavirus and the development of an [in-house test](#) that will reduce the wait time for results and spread within the community. Although research has been necessarily ramped down, it does continue and we will ramp up again as soon as we are able. We have begun [preliminary](#) discussions toward that critical goal.

We are here to support you during these unprecedented times. This is all new for us, so thank you for your patience, grace and dedication to your studies. Stay safe and well, and we will look forward to seeing you back on campus when the time is right.

Respectfully,

A black pen with a silver clip and a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter".

Peter F. Buckley, M.D.
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Dean, VCU School of Medicine
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