

Steven D. Reece

From: Erich Baumgartner <baumgart@andrews.edu>
Sent: Sunday, July 7, 2019 21:25
To: sdreece@matzevah.org
Subject: Re: Dissertation Defense Preparation

Hi Steven:

Welcome back to America! Yes, soon you will be defending your dissertation. This coming week you will be receiving an email from the graduate secretary that will a formal outline of your defense session. I am glad you checked out the video. Each university probably does it a bit differently. In our case we give the external examiner double the time of the committee members. Most of the time that means that there is some good dialogue possible. Since the external examiner has not been part of the dissertation process she is somewhat of a wildcard, however, the way she responded to my request leads me to believe that she is genuinely interested in your work. The goal is to have an external pair of eyes examine the evidence and see if it holds up to their standards. Still we are the ones that keep control of the process. You should feel that you are among friends and fellow researchers.

Aim at 18 minutes with the presentation. Not more than about 20 slides, unless you walk quickly through some of them. In your case I would urge you to set the context also with some pictures and indicate very briefly how you became interested in the topic. End with key conclusions and recommendations. Yours is such a rich study that you will have to be selective. You are welcome to also have some handouts. A couple weeks ago I was amazed when Christiane, who dealt with convergence in media, brought 8 pages of newsprint containing a summary of her dissertation, a column of her findings and conclusions, and a two-page spread of her model of competency development. Basically a very concise summary of her dissertation with her picture and key graphics. Then she could refer to it in the defense. It was one of those good surprises and the defense went very well.

Try to give short and to the point answers so there can be a true dialogue. If the question is beyond your research briefly mention that and often you can then give a personal perspective or you can leave it at that. You can bring any help, the dissertation itself, marked and ready to use it as your reference. Above all come and enjoy a good conversation about what you did and learned.

I will be in the office this week. You are welcome to call if you want to talk about any more questions. The following week is a bit more problematic since I will be at the Orientation all day throughout the week. Hope this helps. God with you as you prepare yourself for the defense.

Erich

Erich Baumgartner, PhD

Director, PhD in Leadership Program
Andrews University
baumgart@andrews.edu
Office: 269.471.2523
Cell: 269.697.3943

On Jul 7, 2019, at 11:09, Steven D. Reece <sdreece@matzevah.org> wrote:

Dear Erich,

I am home now from Poland and have rested up a bit over the past few days. I am now beginning to prepare for my defense

A friend suggested that I check out a YouTube video of Dr. Dion A. Forster on [Final Doctoral Examination, PhD Viva, or Defense - Advice, tips and guidance VLOG 107](#). The video is about 15 minutes but gives a basic overview and some helpful hints about preparing for and participating in the dissertation defense.

One helpful tip that he provided was to get to know everyone on the committee. The only person that I do not know on my committee is Dr. Annamaria Orla-Bukowska. I have looked at her online [profile](#) and purchased an ebook that she co-authored on Jewish-Polish relations – Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future (Kindle Edition). I have briefly read through the book looking in particular for how the authors treated dialogue. The book is a good summary of formal developments in Polish Jewish and Christian relations in the US and Poland along with discussing issues of cross-cultural diplomacy and interreligious relations. The authors do not seem to define clearly what dialogue is and discuss it as an understood practice among participants.

I understand that for my defense that I will need to prepare a 20 minute PowerPoint Presentation outlining the background, problem, research questions, methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

I also understand that following my presentations that, I will be questioned by the committee and the external reader.

Beyond these major pieces, is there anything else that I should do or do to be prepared?

Thank you,

Steven

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