The Graduate School would like to congratulate you on the completion of your doctoral studies! We hope that you will be able to participate in this year’s Commencement activities. Please review the following information carefully, as it includes instructions that you must follow in order to be recognized personally during the VCU Commencement on Saturday, May 9, 2020, at the Greater Richmond Convention Center.

**Before May 4, 2020:**
Please complete the RSVP form, including your adviser/escort’s name as well as the pronunciation of your name, spelled phonetically. This RSVP is used to organize the lineup of doctoral graduates. Please note that this is a different RSVP form than the one used for the general commencement head count. **RSVP here:** [https://forms.gle/Bpm3GfQBXZj5wueCA](https://forms.gle/Bpm3GfQBXZj5wueCA)

For further questions, contact Jamie Taylor by phone at (804) 828-2233 or by email at taylorjl25@vcu.edu.

**Saturday, May 9, 2020: Arrival and lining up for the Commencement Ceremony**
Report to the Greater Richmond Convention Center at 403 N. 3rd St, Richmond, VA 23219 by **8:45 a.m.** Please give yourself additional travel time as heavy traffic near GRCC is expected and all candidates will be checked by security before entering the Grand Ballroom. Graduates should proceed to the line-up area at the Fifth and Marshall entrance of the Ballroom Pavilion of GRCC. Guest will not be able to enter the Grand Ballroom, or line up area, with you. Your guests are invited to find seating in the Exhibit Hall of the GRCC. Please leave valuables with your guest as there will be no secured space to store these items in the Grand Ballroom.

Once inside, follow the signs located throughout directing Ph.D. and Ed.D. candidates to the Grand Ballroom on the second floor. Please be sure to check in with Graduate School personnel as soon as you arrive. **You cannot arrive late and place yourself in line. Students who arrive after 9:30 a.m. may not be able to be placed in line properly.**

After checking in, you will receive a numbered card with your name printed on it. Candidates will be presented in alphabetical order by school/department. **Place yourself in line according to the number printed on your card.** Please be patient and plan to stay in line once you have been placed.

**Advisors will be asked to join their advisees on stage.** Please let our office know who your advisor is by filling out the google form sent via email so we can invite them to attend commencement. If an advisor has more than one student participating in commencement, then all of his/her students will be hooded with the first student in line (this may change your line placement). If your advisor cannot attend commencement with you, please arrange for an alternative advisor such as advisory committee member. If you are alone the honorary marshal will accompany you on stage.

The Graduate School will have two faculty honorary marshals. One of these marshals will lead you onto the stage and the other will be at the rear of the procession. Please follow their lead at all times!

**NOTE: You MUST be in line with your numbered card by 9 a.m.**

continued
Marching into the Exhibit Hall and during the Ceremony:
March in with your hood draped over your left arm with the front of the hood pointing. Wear your mortar board centered on your head, tassel to the left. Traditionally, men remove their mortar boards for the invocation and keep them off during the address. Follow the lead of your marshals. Mortar boards are put back on when the awarding of the degrees begins.

The Faculty Marshal will stand, signal you to stand as a group and then lead you to the steps at the stage (student first, advisor follows). Pause at the top of the steps and hand your card to the Faculty Marshal on stage. They will announce your name and you will walk the few steps with your advisor following. Dr. Boudinot will take your hood from your arm and place it over your head. Turn and face the audience while you are being hooded. Walk to the other side of the stage where President Rao will shake your hand. Proceed across the stage, down the steps and return to your seat.

Enter your row as you did when you first entered the Exhibit Hall. Remain standing at your seat until all doctoral candidates have been hooded. The Faculty Marshal will give the signal to be seated.

At the end of the ceremony the Faculty Marshal will lead you off the floor.

Seating in the Greater Richmond Convention Center:
You will march across the stage from right to left. **Please be aware that guest seating is on a first-come basis and the best seats go fast.** Doors to the GRCC will open at 8:30 a.m. for guest.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact Jamie Taylor.

Again, congratulations on the completion of your doctoral program at VCU!

Sincerely,

F. Douglas Boudinot
Dean
Graduate School