



LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

April 1, 2005

To: Department of Economics and Business Honors Students

From: Professor Ed Gamber, Department of Economics and Business

RE: Final Thesis Defense Dates and Presentation Guidelines

As you have known since last August, a defense ready copy of your thesis is due on April __, 2005 to all of your committee members. Defenses will be scheduled for the weeks of April __ and May __. The department does not encourage students to defend during finals week and may not support requests to do so.

The following are suggested guidelines to use when preparing for the final defense of your honors thesis. Students are urged to prepare for their defense in close consultation with their thesis advisor.

1. Pay close attention to the title of your thesis. Read the chapter on titles in “Writing Empirical Research Reports” book. Your title is the first introduction to your work and you want it to be meaningful and descriptive.
2. Each student will schedule with Mrs. Mutton, the department secretary, a two-hour time slot for their final defense. It is the responsibility of the *student* to insure that all committee members are available to attend the defense. If your thesis is joint with another department, you must still inform Mrs. Mutton of your scheduled time so that we may publicize your defense. Remember that your defense will likely be attended by more than just your committee. You can invite friends and family if you like. We invite all department faculty to attend as well as juniors who are eligible to write a thesis.
3. You must get a defense ready copy of your thesis to your committee no later than April __. A faculty member has the right to withdraw from your committee if they feel that have not had adequate time to read your thesis prior to your defense.
4. Each student must prepare a 20 minute talk describing their thesis and their results and conclusions. Most students use Power Point although it is not required. If you choose to use Power Point, follow the guidelines below for an effective presentation;
 - a. *Power Point* must be used effectively. For a presentation (as opposed to using Power Point to teach a class) to be effective, it should contain no more than 3 or 4 lines per slide and no more than 3 or 4 words per line. Anything more than that is distracting to the audience and detracts from the effectiveness of your presentation.

- b. Use the options available for both format and coloring of the presentation. For viewing a presentation, a dark background with lighter lettering is considered by many to be the most effective format.
 - c. Make sure that there is a logical sequence to your slides so that the information is presented in a coherent manner that enhances your presentation.
 - d. Refrain from overusing sound effects and other special that may be distracting to your presentation.
 - e. Your presentation should emphasize your **method, results and conclusions**. A thorough review of previous literature review is not necessary at the defense. Suggested slide format: Introduction and statement of hypothesis, brief placement in the literature, method and data, results, conclusions.
 - f. PRACTICE your presentation. The content is, of course, most important, but presentation counts as well.
5. Handouts of key tables are useful if you have many numbers to go over. You can make these at the department copy machine.
6. During the question and answer session, each honors candidate should be prepared to entertain a variety of questions. You may wish to ask committee members in advance if they can provide at least a partial list of the questions they might ask. You must convince your committee that you understand and are comfortable with the content that you are presenting, and you must be able to intelligently discuss the importance of your work. Failure to do this can result in graduating without honors.
7. There is no guarantee that you will pass your defense. It depends upon the quality of the work you have done and your ability to defend it. You are the expert and you must demonstrate to your committee and the department, that you have done sufficient work to merit honors. Even at this late date, the department has the right to deny you honors.
8. Following the question/answer session, the committee will ask the audience to leave the room. During this time they will discuss the merits of the work and determine whether or not any revisions are necessary. Revisions are usually necessary. The committee will then decide whether or not honors will be conferred. If substantial revisions are necessary, the committee will hold off granting honors until successful completion and review of the revisions.
9. Upon successful completion of the defense, each student needs to make copies of the thesis and have them bound. The department pays for four bound copies – see Mrs. Mutton for information on where to go to get this done. The four copies are for you, your advisor, the library and the department. We must have our copies before graduation.
10. Students must be sure that their thesis follows the guidelines set forth in the book “Writing Empirical Research Reports.” Thus, a full set of references, etc. is necessary and must be submitted with the thesis.