Here are some strategies/process on behalf of Dr. Barbara Chamberlin, Extension Instructional Design and Educational Media Specialist:

**BEFORE MEETING**

Log on 10 to 15 minutes before the meeting to talk to your students about what to expect and to calm down any anxiety that may be occurring:

Then,

- I used a meeting room, and made it publicly accessible, sending it to committee members and candidates a few days ahead so that they could invite others to attend
- as Dean’s rep, I prepped an individual ballot for each committee member and mailed it them before the meeting
- to try and decrease any unwanted zoombombers, I enabled waiting room, ready to ask each person to introduce themselves as they came in.
- I also set so that only host can use background video, share screen, and private chat

**AS MEETING STARTED**

- As each committee member logged on, I made each committee member co-hosts
- I convened meeting, gave introductions and overview

**FIRST BREAKOUT**

- I then created a breakout room moved our candidate and our guests into that breakout room, so that just the committee could talk in the main room. After our initial discussion, we closed the breakout room and invited everyone back into the main meeting

**PRESENTATION**

- I made candidate cohost so she could present
- I began recording to the cloud (Otherwise committee discussion would have been in video)
- candidate shared presentation, we did Q&A with committee, and opened to questions from the other attendees.
- I stopped video recording
COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS

- I reopened the breakout room, and again moved the candidate and the guests into that breakout room.
- Committee completed their ballots and emailed to me.
- I announced verdict to committee

END OF MEETING

- We again closed the breakout room, inviting candidate and guests back in.
- Emphasized to the candidate that she was an innovator, though there are disappointing aspects of an online defense, she contributed something new and important to our field by doing this online, and doing so in an exemplary way.
- I wanted to state publicly in her forum that — though accommodations are being made in all classes now, I did not feel that we had to change how we assessed or appraised her work. I didn’t want her to ever doubt if her dissertation was “good enough” only because it was in a COVID year. I affirmed that we didn’t have to change how we assessed her work.
- Because she passed... we all made a little paper sign, and held it up to our cameras when she got back into the main meeting room, congratulating her. We also posed for committee pictures, with all of us in video boxes on screen. I also took some screen shots of her presenting.
- We closed with plans to have a small reception for her, when we all get back to being around people again.

AFTER MEETING

- Afterwards, I shared the screen shots and images, as well as the archived video with her. That way, she can share with others, on social media, and family members... as well as watch video to capture the recommended changes. Everyone deserves a photo of themselves on the day they successfully defend!
- I compiled my report documentation, and the signed ballots from committee members into ONE PDF and emailed it to the grad school. They emailed receipt back to me today.

Overall, it went smoothly. I feel the discussion went easily, as did her presentation. The worst part of it was *not being there to shake her hand*. On the other hand, she has a nice recording of the event... helpful in reviewing her notes for changes to her document.