From: Dr. Joshua Ezra Burns
To: Graduate students in the Department of Theology
Re: Reviewing dissertation draft submissions

Esteemed student,

Having recently assumed the role of Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Klinger College of Arts and Sciences, I shoulder a very heavy workload. Although I remain committed to directing doctoral dissertations, the time I possess for reviewing draft submissions is limited. I therefore wish to inform you of the following policies articulating (a) what you can expect of me with respect to reviewing your draft submissions, and (b) what I expect of you with respect to their preparation. Please note that these terms apply to all draft submissions relating to doctoral dissertations inclusive of outlines and bibliographies. In addition, please be advised that my policies are not negotiable and are to be considered in effect immediately and until which time I no longer serve in my current role in the College.

1. I have a lengthy and continually repopulating to-do list. Many of the tasks on my to-do list are time-sensitive, which means I must prioritize those tasks. I attend to other, non-time-sensitive tasks in the order I receive them. As a matter of routine, I do not consider the review of a dissertation draft submission a time-sensitive task.

2. When I receive your dissertation draft submission, I will add the task of reviewing it to my to-do list at the same position where I add every task that I do not consider time-sensitive, that is, at the bottom. Your submission will move up the list upon my completion of each task above it, that is, as I complete each task added to the list prior to my having received your submission. I will review your submission when it reaches the top of the list.

3. When preparing your draft submission, it is your responsibility to format your citations and/or bibliography consistently and to an appropriate academic style. This is a requirement of both the Department of Theology and the Graduate School. The relevant policies of each academic unit appear as appendices to this memo.

4. As I review your draft submission, I will keep count of formatting errors in your citations and/or bibliographical entries. Should my count exceed five errors for every twenty pages of material submitted, I will stop reading your submission and send you an email advising you to proofread your citations and/or bibliography, correct all formatting and style errors, and resubmit your work. When I receive your revised draft submission, I will add the task of reviewing it to my to-do list at the same position where I add every other non-time-sensitive task, that is, at the bottom.
5. I will review only complete drafts. That is, I will not review partially completed drafts of outlines, chapters, or bibliographies. I do not have the time to review the same materials again and again. Nor do I wish for you to fixate on perfecting one section of your work at the expense of your holistic progress. If you wish to receive my input regarding a draft or a section of a draft prior to its completion, please make an appointment to meet with me or to consult with me over the phone. I will be happy to discuss your concerns without conducting a formal review of your work.

6. I will review only one draft per submission. I do not wish to keep you waiting for my feedback for an inordinate amount of time. If therefore, you have multiple drafts for me to review, please submit one and await my feedback before submitting another.

7. At the end of every fall and spring academic term, I must issue a grade of satisfactory (SNC) or unsatisfactory (UNC) to each of my advisees registered for continuous enrollment courses in that term, including those whose dissertations I am directing. If, at that time, you have submitted draft material(s) since the prior fall or spring grading deadline, I will give you a grade of SNC. If you have not submitted any drafts since the prior fall or spring grading deadline, I will contact you to ask about your recent progress. If, in that case, you make a persuasive case for receiving a grade of SNC despite your non-submission of any drafts since the prior fall or spring grading deadline, I will give you a grade of SNC. If not, I will give you grade of UNC, which will trigger your academic censure, likely followed by your placement on probation.

I expect that might find my policies exacting. However, in making you accountable to standards of performance to which you should adhere without my express instructions, I do not consider my expectations unreasonable. I can forgive occasional errors. But habitual negligence or sloppiness on your part shows poor discipline and lack of respect for your reader. My time is valuable. I must allocate it equitably to all who require it, including other students whose dissertations I am directing. I also deserve time to conduct my own research. Consequently, for me to commit more time to your needs than I commit to my own needs and the needs of your fellow students would be unfair to everyone but you.

If you intend to begin or to continue working on your dissertation under my directorship, I urge you to attend to these policies. I will enforce them when demands on my time compel me to. So please plan ahead. When preparing draft submission, proofread your work before I must tell you to do it. When submitting drafts, do not expect me to get back to you with my assessment of your work when you happen to find it most convenient. I will not always be able do that. If the timeliness of my response stands to affect your enrollment eligibility, eligibility for financial aid, or graduation plans, please let me know at the time of your submission. I will do my best to accommodate you. In short, respect my needs and I will respect yours. The alternative means to risk potentially limitless frustration on your end regarding your rate of progress. Let us work together to avoid that outcome.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Joshua
Appendix A

Department of Theology Policies and Procedures on Style

2.11 Style Guidelines

The Department has adopted the style guidelines of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (2017), and Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (2018), as its standard guidelines for all written assignments submitted in coursework as well as comprehensive papers, final projects, theses, and dissertations. Students working with ancient texts also may utilize *The SBL Handbook of Style for Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (2014). These volumes are available in print editions in the reference section at Raynor Library and/or in electronic editions through the Raynor Memorial Libraries online catalogue.

Appendix B

Graduate School Dissertation Directives on (a) Style and (b) Bibliography and References

(a) Style guides vary greatly from one field or program to another, so the student should consult his/her adviser regarding recommended style manuals to follow. If the department has no preference, the Graduate School suggests using the American Psychological Association (APA), Turabian, or the Modern Language Association of America (MLA).

(b) References cite the sources of attributable material in the body of the text. References may be cited parenthetically (MLA or APA style), footnoted at the bottom of the page or in end notes at the end of the dissertation, depending on the department’s preferred style manual. References may not be noted at the end of a chapter. The citation format must be consistent throughout the dissertation.