

Academic Affairs Online Intimidation and Attacks Response Task Force Final Report May 2022

Membership

Chair: Meg Mulrooney, Office of VPFCP

Members:

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Charge: The Academic Affairs Online Intimidation and Attacks Response Task Force is charged to develop response procedures that will help guide the division of Academic Affairs in supporting faculty and staff who experience intentional targeting, intimidation, threats, or similar attacks for statements, activities, or content shared in the course of their regular work.

Summary of Current Semester Activity:

- We met every two weeks from early February until May 10th. Team members divided into three subgroups to complete the tasks of researching similar documents/resources/actions at other universities, as well as information related to online attacks and to statements on academic freedom (eg AAUP, PEN America, FIRE). The group determined early in the process to focus on responses to attacks from outside the university, since external attacks were the initial impetus. As the draft came together, we provided regular updates to the Provost's office through the interim VPFCP.
- The draft went to important university stakeholders for input: university counsel, university spokesperson, Provost Leadership Team (PLT), IT, Chief of Police) as well as several faculty whose research expertise included social media.
- The development of the rapid response actions was also the subject of an AUH session during which useful information was shared.
- The final draft was shared with PLT on May 24, 2022 with recommendations for distribution.

Future Work Planned:

This task force has concluded its work but recommends the following:

- To post the Rapid Response items as a pdf on the task force's webpage for use by Academic Affairs community.

- To promote the document's existence by:
 - Sending emails to AA faculty, staff, administrators.
 - Scheduling an info session with AUHs in early fall.
 - Creating a tri-fold version or postcard to send to departments/AUHs for easy reference.

- To convene a second, follow-up team to develop a similar set of recommended action steps for use in other circumstances (such as JMU students attacking faculty, staff, or other students). The team heard from faculty and staff about such situations occurring.

Appendices

Rapid Response document will be provided in Fall 2022.