

Response Protocol for Targeted Biased, Intimidating, or Harassing Communications

Wake Forest University

February 2020

This document sets forth Wake Forest University's protocol for responding to biased, intimidating, or harassing emails or other communications targeted to University faculty, staff, and/or students. The University foundationally affirms faculty's academic freedom in their teaching, research, and creative work, and recognizes that faculty may more frequently be the recipients of biased, intimidating, or harassing emails or other communications given the nature of their work. While these protocols may therefore be of most relevance to faculty, they apply equally to biased, intimidating, or harassing communications targeted to University staff and/or students.

Faculty, staff, and/or students targeted by biased, intimidating, or harassing communications are encouraged to take one or more immediate steps: contact University Police, file a report with the University's Bias Incident Response System, and alert their work supervisor (in the case of faculty, department chair and dean's office). Upon receipt of a report, the following steps will swiftly be undertaken:

1. University Police will assess the report for danger and imminent harm, and will collaborate with local, state, and/or federal law enforcement officials as appropriate, along with the targeted WFU community member(s). The process for determining whether a reported incident is a crime and possibly a hate crime will be carried out by University Police; this determination may require investigation, consultation with threat assessment experts, and referral to other agencies.
2. University Police will evaluate and communicate to appropriate University officials the initial and any ongoing assessment of danger or imminent harm to members of the University community. University Police or other law enforcement officials involved in the review and investigation of the threat or harassment will advise University officials on necessary security or precautionary measures—for example, whether increased security officials or cancellation or delay of classes would be appropriate. As noted in #1, any targeted individual(s) will also be engaged.
3. A Bias Incident Response Group will review reports submitted through the Bias Incident Response System and will reach out to individuals who have witnessed or experienced bias to provide care and offer support. The Bias Incident Response Group will also refer the report to the appropriate University office for investigation when the incident may involve a violation of University policy, such as the Undergraduate Student Code of Conduct or the Faculty and Staff Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy.
4. Separate from communications made through the Bias Incident Response Group, in situations involving an affected staff or faculty member(s), the appropriate dean or VP (or

their designee) will become the point person for coordination of communications and information sharing. Affected staff or faculty should address questions or concerns to this point person. In situations involving an affected student(s), the VP of Campus Life (or designee) will serve as the point person.

5. University Police or other officials will notify the University's Chief Information Security Officer or other appropriate employees in Information Systems (IS) about reports of biased, intimidating, or harassing communications. IS may be asked to redirect subsequent emails sent through the University's email system from the email address or sender of the threatening/hate-speech email. Any such emails already received by students, faculty, or staff will not be removed from recipients' email inboxes.
6. In consultation with University Police or other officials, Information Systems will conduct an investigation into the origin of the emails or other communications, and will consult, when appropriate, with outside cybersecurity experts.
7. The University may report information about biased, intimidating, or harassing communications once facts are gathered and the release of information is appropriate. The Dean(s) involved, in consultation with the Provost's Office, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Campus Life, Communications & External Relations, Legal Department, and University Police, will evaluate and determine what, if any, campus-wide or other specific communication (to faculty within an affected department, e.g.) is desirable. Persons targeted by the communication(s) will be consulted in this determination; respect for their privacy, reputation, and safety must be considered. In the case of an imminent or ongoing threat to the University community, University Police will immediately send a notification in accordance with the procedures for dissemination of emergency communications.
8. The University also recognizes there may be a need to manage rumors and misinformation that may accompany targeted harassment, including bias-related or hate-speech communications. The University will disseminate information through use of appropriate and effective means as the situation warrants and as details become known.