Guidelines for Responding to Email Campaigns

If you receive:

Purpose of these Guidelines

To help faculty and staff members decide how to respond to email campaigns against scholars.

Tactics of Email Campaigns

Email campaigns are a common means of objecting to a scholar's work. Some campaigns focus on generating a high volume of messages, some use vehement (or even vitriolic) language, and some use both tactics. They also may direct messages to different recipients, including the scholar and "secondary targets" (e.g., colleagues, collaborators, academic unit, university leaders).

Goals of Email Campaigns

A primary objective of email campaigns is to prompt an *institutional* response, not an individual response.

Keeping this in mind may lessen both the pressure to respond (most senders aren't expecting an individual response) and the stress they can cause, especially for recipients other than the scholar.

Numerous, distracting, and/or upsetting emails:

- Set up rules in Outlook to automatically divert similar messages to a dedicated folder

Reasonable email, known sender with direct affiliation to York:

- Response may be unnecessary; managers/administrators can decide if response is warranted and by whom
- York's Communications & Public Affairs (C&PA) team can assist with decision-making and messaging, if applicable
- Save the message in a dedicated folder

Reasonable email, unknown sender:

- Response likely unnecessary and unadvisable; managers/administrators may choose to respond with a simple, uniform statement
- C&PA can assist with decision-making and messaging, if applicable
- Save the message in a dedicated folder

Unreasonable email, any sender:

- **Do not respond;** this will often only fan the flames.
- **Do not delete**; instead, save in dedicated folder and inform manager/administrator
- Optionally:
  - forward to a manager/administrator, who can save and alert others as needed
  - alert the UIT Information Security team by emailing infosec@yorku.ca or if an Outlook email, click the "Report" button in the top menu bar to send the message to Information Security