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November 1, 2017

To: All Faculty of The City University of New York

From: Daniel McCloskey, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor, CUNY Office of Research
Gregory Gosselin, Interim University Dean of Libraries and Information Systems

Subject: **CUNY Guidelines Regarding Publishing In Predatory Journals**

Dear Colleagues, as you may have seen, [an article](#) appeared yesterday in *The New York Times*, which suggested that faculty across the nation, including CUNY faculty, are increasingly using pay-to-publish “predatory” journals and conferences as outlets for disseminating research findings. The author suggests that this growing trend is due to both the dubious practices of these publishers to represent themselves as rigorous, peer-reviewed outlets for dissemination, and the knowing utilization of these less respectable outlets by faculty who feel pressured to increase their publication record for promotion and tenure.

As you know, efforts to implement [CUNY’s new Strategic Framework](#) are well underway, and the “Knowledge Creation” pillar is a central component of this plan. The University is determined to raise its scholarly profile, while providing all of our students with direct access to our renowned scholars, and the academic community direct access to their work. We are pleased to offer a variety of quality programs aimed at increasing faculty scholarly productivity and advancing their scholarly careers. Ensuring that we have a faculty who follow the best practices of their disciplines and lead by example in creating new knowledge and disseminating it through respected channels is the single best way to ensure that we meet this goal.

At this time, due to the rapidly changing landscape of publishing and the lack of frank discussion about this topic nationally or locally, it is difficult to know the nature and extent of this problem at CUNY, but the reputations of our faculty, colleges and the university are at stake. The Central Office of Research within the Office of Academic Affairs provided guidance on this matter last semester and last week, and is prepared to do more. In order to be sure that all faculty, review committees and college administrators follow best practices moving forward, we implore you to open a dialogue with your academic department, program, center or institution. Please encourage your colleagues to read the [memo issued in May by the Office of Research](#) and the [excellent conference paper](#) by Monica Berger detailing the research related to “predatory” publishing and the need for all stakeholders to provide due diligence related to publishing choices. While rigorous peer-review may not be an option for all scholarship, it is important to be ethical as well as judicious and thoughtful about your publishing choices by selecting trustworthy publishers and correctly reporting the publication on your CV. Please consider these topics as an agenda item for your next regular meeting with your colleagues, and take advantage of the knowledge and resources of CUNY librarians to foster this discussion.

The CUNY Offices of Library Services and Research will continue to work with faculty leaders of our senates, departments and initiatives like the CUNY Writing Bootcamps to foster discussion in those venues. Together with information and efforts to stamp out ambiguity, we will maintain the profile of CUNY research and scholarship as world-class and rigorous.



Memo from the CUNY Office of Research Dated May 18, 2017:

Dear Colleagues,

It has come to our attention that several CUNY authors, including PSC-CUNY grant funded researchers, may have been exposed to 'so-called' predatory publishers, including having to pay open-access fee charges for articles appearing in journals of ill repute.

Could you please alert your faculty of these dangers, perhaps by circulating the attached Nature article on "The Dark Side of Publishing"?

<http://www.nature.com/news/investigating-journals-the-dark-side-of-publishing-1.12666>

Here, D. Butlers suggests the following(quoted from p. 435):

"A checklist to identify reputable publishers

How to perform due diligence before submitting to a journal or publisher.

- Check that the publisher provides full, verifiable contact information, including address, on the journal site. Be cautious of those that provide only web contact forms.
- Check that a journal's editorial board lists recognized experts with full affiliations. Contact some of them and ask about their experience with the journal or publisher.
- Check that the journal prominently displays its policy for author fees.
- Be wary of e-mail invitations to submit to journals or to become editorial board members.
- Read some of the journal's published articles and assess their quality. Contact past authors to ask about their experience.
- Check that a journal's peer-review process is clearly described and try to confirm that a claimed impact factor is correct.
- Find out whether the journal is a member of an industry association that vets its members, such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org) or the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (www.oaspa.org).
- Use common sense, as you would when shopping online: if something looks fishy, proceed with caution. D.B."

Thanks,

Best, Mark

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