Faculty Senate Resolution #19-68
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Guidelines for Evaluation of Faculty Scholarly Communication Record, as follows:

Purpose
These guidelines are intended primarily to aid evaluators looking at faculty scholarly productivity. Examples of situations when these guidelines may be helpful include the annual review process, the promotion and tenure process, etc. This information may also help faculty authors identify reputable publishers when considering where to submit scholarly work.

Rationale
In recent years, the number and character of scholarly journals and similar publications in which faculty present their work has expanded considerably. For authors, this expansion clearly provides opportunity to share their work with a specific, knowledgeable audience. This rapid growth in the number of journals also leads to potential publishing pitfalls for authors.

One particularly problematic area is the increased number of predatory or fake journals that publish content with little or no peer review so long as authors are willing to pay a fee. These publishers commonly draw in authors with promises of rapid publication, inflated impact factors, and other deceptive practices. Enticements like these can be very appealing to authors who feel constantly pressured to demonstrate their productivity for annual reporting, the tenure and promotion process, and other evaluations.

In some cases, recognizing a predatory journal is relatively simple. In many other cases, the boundary between predatory and legitimate publishers is less clear. With the ongoing rapid growth of publications, even authors with considerable experience in a given field may have trouble evaluating the legitimacy of some journals. This complexity and uncertainty affects both scholarly authors and those tasked to evaluate their efforts.

Each unit at ECU must abide by its unit code, which discusses evaluation of scholarship. Consequently, an overarching University-wide policy would likely be difficult or even impossible to develop. However, some cross-disciplinary, widely applicable best practices for evaluation of scholarship do exist. This document is an attempt to bring some of these best practices and pertinent resources to the attention of interested authors and evaluators.

Guidelines
Among the most important points to keep in mind about predatory journals (and book publishers) is that publication fees (also known as subventions) are not the same as being predatory. While all predatory publishers require subvention for publication, not all subvention is predatory. Publishing in emerging areas of study may mean smaller audiences, requiring some assistance in publication. Similarly, subvention is one model being used to help pay for open-access academic, peer-reviewed publication. Instead, most of the same criteria used to evaluate publication in more traditional venues should be used—peer review, acceptance rates, scholarly impact, etc.

Anyone considering these matters is very strongly encouraged to consult with ECU librarians, as they may have already investigated a specific journal or publisher. They have also compiled resources to assist with journal and publisher evaluation (e.g. see the Resources section below).
For authors: To be effective teachers and scholars, all faculty must strive to stay abreast both of developments in subject matter in their discipline, and how those developments are communicated. Responsibility for publishing in reputable journals lies primarily with the authors. When considering where to submit material for publication, authors should consult with librarians, colleagues, mentors, and other professionals to determine best journals for submission.

For evaluators: Responsibility for evaluation of faculty scholarship starts with the unit. The most critical and detailed review of scholarship is likely to occur within the unit, where other faculty are most likely to be familiar with the reviewee’s subject matter. Within each unit, the Personnel Committee and Unit Head should strive to stay abreast of developments in their discipline.

This responsibility does not rest solely with the Personnel Committee and Unit Head – all faculty need to be involved in the evaluation process and assist with mentoring of new faculty.

For educators: Discussion of these matters should be incorporated into student education. As both readers and authors of scholarly materials, it is recommended that students be exposed to and understand the need for critical evaluation of publication venues.

Resources
The ECU Libraries website provides a range of helpful resources that can be used by both authors and evaluators. These include:

- Journal Selection and Evaluation [http://libguides.ecu.edu/journalpub]
- Evaluating Publishers [http://libguides.ecu.edu/journalpub/evals]
- Recorded Office of Faculty Excellence session on Evaluating Open Access Publishers [https://mediasite.ecu.edu/MS/Play/530fc9855a08427293d1852fd8d2e1b61d?catalog=410910e4606e42818502e112fba717fe21]

Additionally, a growing body of peer-reviewed literature exists on the subject of predatory journals, open-access publishing, and related issues².³.

References