Comments classified:

ClimateQUAL Comment Summary
The ClimateQUAL survey concluded with an unlimited free text question. Thirty respondents included comments with their surveys.

- Lack of equality between staff and librarians; non-librarians feel under-appreciated and underpaid.

Annual evaluations do not provide a way to reward employees for new responsibilities they have taken on or done particularly well. Simply stating on the evaluation that the employee has completed tasks that are at a certain level does nothing to reward the person and encourage additional initiative. The more employees feel beaten down when they initiate new ideas and volunteer for new responsibilities, the less they will volunteer in the future. Genuine, incremental rewards encourage teamwork and quality performance and don’t require promotions - just recognition for a job well done.

Evaluations
I still think that these are a waste of supervisor’s time and are not effective tools for the employee. Some supervisor’s still make their staff do these for them. We are also having problems with these being done in a timely manner; I signed mine last year in December and I still haven’t seen mine for this year. Our scores keep getting lower and lower and yet we are supposed to be happy working here when that gives you the impression that you aren’t valued for what you are doing. Also the bar keeps getting raised for job performance so this is also discouraging – if you do more one year then even more is expected the next year.

Employee recognition
I find it very ironic that it took a staff organization to finally recognize library staff. This didn’t come from the faculty or from the supervisors which is where it should have. The Employee Recognition program came from staff who realized that this was a problem that needed to be addressed. Also I think there is a problem with faculty listening to staff or even including them in on decisions that are made that directly affect them. I personally attended a meeting where I talked to faculty about a problem in the library and they “listened” and then did something so opposite what I had talked about that it was obvious that this was a total waste of time.

The total lack of respect for staff employees in this library is the main problem. It is evident in pay, evaluation and day to day interactions between many staff employees and faculty/administration. The majority of daily operations are performed by staff employees. Why is it we have to be constantly stressed about how we are going to pay for even the basic necessities for daily life (housing, food, transportation, etc.). Combine this with observing someone who has a position only because of a degree obtained earlier in life make more than twice your salary and do very little of the work staff employees are required to do. There is no library science program at this institution so teaching is not a responsibility on their list. A non-accredited intro to library resources course once or twice a year is not classroom instruction in my opinion. Then faculty bring up the issue of their having to do research. This is just another joke to justify having faculty status. There is even time off to do research. The movie theaters and favorite eating establishments love them for their patronage. I know this comment might sound like a chance to display bitterness. That is not my intent. You wanted the truth. I am, as always, giving without receiving.

Faculty and sometimes staff should also respond to e-mails sent by staff and not ignore them – I have heard about instances where this has happened and I have had problems with some of the public service staff responding to my e-mails. I don’t think that this is a problem in my department but it can be or has been when interacting with faculty in other areas at times.

There is a lack of a ‘true’ Public Service sector in organizational chart and plans. This lack creates an ignored or overlooked separation of services and labor performed by employees outside their assigned departments in the organization. Lack of a Public Service sector allows for non-recognition, by supervisor and administration, of the
multiple aspects of performances required by employees within this organization; thus, providing no valid means of true recognition or a full guaranteed evaluation of employees' skills and performance.

New hires have job descriptions in HR, why don't I have an updated job description in HR. It's been six years since my job duties were adjusted: new tasks assigned and assumed; new roles learned and performed; personal incentive taken in assuming responsibility for additional new projects inside and outside my department; and personally engaging in and pursuit of ongoing training opportunities to keep ahead of the constant learning curve required in this job, this library. Job security is assured, yet I have no papers.

Also when decisions are made about branches where library assistants are the ones who have run the branch for years they should be part of any committee or group making decisions about or changes for that location – they were responsible for day to day operations and should be shown the respect that that experience has provided them by including them too. Too many decisions are made at the top without staff input so that the staff ends up having to solve problems that could have been avoided if they had been given the chance to provide their input at the outset. Just because there is a department head doesn’t mean that they know how things work and what the best decision is if they aren’t in touch with that aspect of the department or if they have trouble seeing the big picture and how the change may affect their staff who are actually doing the job.

The yearly staff performance appraisal process exists its present form for no other reason than to intimidate staff and put “them in their place”.

I am mostly satisfied with my work and the environment here at the University of Memphis Libraries. However, I cannot help but note the undercurrent of tension, and an "us vs. them" mentality that appears to have a stronghold on a small group of people who have been employed by the libraries for a very long time. It does not make me feel good to read email communications directed to the entire library regarding the lack of recognition for staff work. Granted, I don't know the full cultural history of McWherter Library, but to continue to draw this line in the sand will stunt our cultural and professional growth as a library and may alienate people from one another. Allowing the freedom of speech in our organization is important, but it should not be done towards the detriment of ANY group of workers, be them faculty, staff, or student workers.

You are frowned upon if you have lots of library experience but no Degree, your experience is not taking into consideration, our evaluation procedures is not fair..

**Lack of rewards/low salary**

However, the pay scale is hugely lacking, especially when it comes to staff members.

The section regarding rewards, I could not clearly answer, as I do not believe that we have a rewards system implemented as a library. This is a major area of growth for our organization, and will perhaps lead to a lessening of the tensions among workers of all ranks.

Rewards? Damn, I’m grateful for the occasional Thank you! from patrons and a Well Done! or Great Job! from a fellow employee. Salary increases and merit raises in these economic times are ‘flights of fancy.’ What I’d like to see is a valid job description that recognizes my value and contribution to the organization, but I don’t expect it, so it’s the personal word of gratitude, thanks and respect from the ‘rank and file’ employees that keeps me going in these hard times. There are real issues related to completing evaluations in a timely manner.

I remember the multipage document I composed in response to a call for consideration of how the library should contribute to the goals outlined in the University Strategic plan. I worked very hard on that. I put very careful thought into it. Can anyone provide a shred of evidence that it mattered and was taken seriously, or had any material effect on any decisions? I remember 4 years ago my call for metadata planning to take place before the start of a digital project, not be an afterthought that has to be completed at a rush. Those are but two examples.

My colleagues, supervisors, and administrators here support my research. I appreciate that. It is the main reason that I stay here.
People are happy

I have found this library to be exemplary when it comes to recognizing an outstanding individual.

The library provides a great work environment. I think everyone is very nice and supportive. I regard the library as the best place for me to work on campus.

Overall, the library is a peaceful place to work and effective in helping users of the library. I feel that the library is a fair

My experience in the Library in the short time I've been here have been superb. I am proud to be an employee of this facility and I greatly enjoy the work I do and the people I've met doing it. They are all passionate, intelligent and clever people and it has been interesting working alongside them.

Almost everyone in this library works very well together. Staffers are recognized for their expertise. Everyone speaks courteously, and most folks are actually friendly. Whenever a problem or question comes up, people are practically jumping out of their seats to offer their ideas or suggestions. "Internal customer service" is highly important here, and well done.
I enjoy the company of my co-workers and am eager to get to the library every morning, and I hate to go home at night. I feel like other people on campus have as much regard for the library as they ought to. The faculty are very supportive of one another in research/writing and other projects.

Despite the well-known failings of our library, we actually go a long way toward meeting the needs of our students and faculty. Every day, I am encouraged by the progress we are making in improving our systems, our collection and our service to the public. We do an excellent job of hiring talented, energetic people with great ideas. It's very exciting to see all the plans bubbling up; I just hope the library administration deals fairly with the ideas, and doesn't ignore or neglect them.

It's cool to work in the library. It's pretty easy and I have a quiet place to do my homework most of the time.

When I scored the "rewards" section, my low scores were primarily because of the criminally low salaries of our staff members. Other rewards, such as recognition, are fine..

People in Technical Services feel disrespected and unappreciated

Technical services staff do not have the same opportunities for rewards as the library prefers the activities that are associated with public service.

Concerns about favoritism

It seems there may be some (perhaps unconscious) bias against homosexuals. Their ideas are not taken as seriously by library administrators.

There is sexism in this library. Men are preferred by the Dean.

Males are favored over females. People who are not straight do not seem to be treated well.

Poor communication throughout the Library and between units

I think that the Dean would be better off just having real conversations with people to find out what they are happy with and frustrated by. I am not sure that we will learn anything from these sliding scale questions. There needs to be more dialogue between the Dean and her employees. The Retreats and the "Open" Forums (do we still have these?) come across as very one-sided. We seem to get politicians' answers instead of a true dialogue.
Communication should flow freely from the dean to the lowest ranked individual. Evaluations are a key tool to this process. Each employee needs to be evaluated fairly. Eliminating or delaying this process is unacceptable. The ultimate responsibility should fall upon the dean.

Communication still needs to be improved, and workshops by HR are not the answer.

Library communication
The fact that the library works on a “from the top down” system for communication is not a good idea. If everyone in the library NEEDS to know then there should be a Library All e-mail informing us what we need to know. Not all department heads share information from the LAC or the Dean or other departments in a timely manner. Monthly department meetings should be required following LAC meetings. Also LAC minutes need to be available within a week of the meeting whenever possible – we shouldn’t have to wait months to find out what was discussed. Staff needs to know what is discussed and what decisions or changes have been made as soon as possible. This is especially important when Dept. Heads make decision on what they personally prefer and do not represent their department as a whole.

It would greatly help teamwork in the Library if more information were passed down from the top. Information is slow in coming, and department heads do not always pass along that information when it is given. Getting LAC minutes a month later does not help fix situations in the short term.

Supervisors/Upper administration
Supervisors here seem to have very little authority.

I would like for supervisors to have more managerial training in the workplace

The main obstacle is at the top. Everyone comes up with plans, ideas, policies, performance reviews, etc., and they go into the Library Administration office and are never seen again. Countless deadlines go by with no action. We are told to await word on a decision and it doesn’t come for weeks; sometimes it never comes. It is hard to plan and hard to help other people on campus understand what's happening at the library. This has a tremendously demoralizing effect. Many people who have this happen to them give up on trying to improve the library. I have heard from quite a few people who say they will never again try to reform a process after having a proposal rejected in an unconstructive way.

Dr. Ford asks for feedback but rarely acts on it. For example we don't get performance appraisals even though we ask. Everything has to go through her but you might never get a response.

There needs to be more planning at the top as well. There is no reason for us not to have a book budget year after year. There must be something that can be cut beside books; it would require some forethought to examine our budget, but that is the job of our top library administrators. This makes us look silly when we speak to other people on campus, and really undermines our credibility.

Our top library administrator is also failing to build relationships on campus that would secure appropriate funding for the library. Every college faces similar budget difficulties as U-M, but clearly not every campus chooses to take it out on the library.

The Dean needs to stop micromanaging the evaluation process.

Planning is very poorly done in this institution. Projects and people are often not given enough time to do a good job, and many projects are just thrown together. When real planning is advocated it is at best ignored, and at worst the person is ridiculed.

The leadership in the library is unclear as to direction.

In taking this survey, I've realized that most of the best parts of working for this library are a product of working under my immediate supervisor.

The dean does not promote the library effectively. Sometimes she will listen and be changed by another perspective but usually once her mind is made up, that's it. She seems to be a good person, can be wise, is passionate and articulate about some things. She can be politically astute and makes herself available. It could make a real
difference for her to have more of a presence on campus and be more communicative with library employees.

I think the library is ran as a dictatorship.. the Dean has to have the last say in everything that is done even small decision that are made, I don't think she trust her supervisors or department heads to lead,

**Unclassified (as of now)**

When it comes to service, I marked that in the middle because we are asking too many people to master too many tasks. If we could have a small group on the RIS desk, they could concentrate on the databases and get really good with them. (I think the people in Special Collections give great service because they really know their collection.) Right now, people's attention is scattered by having too many dissimilar tasks to master.

A lot of staff seem to be burned out from the amount of work that has been done with limited staff so long.

There is a lot of historical baggage in this library. Many staff were disrespected years ago and this impacts their current additudes.

There are issues with project work. Several times I have observed when someone with critical information, or who needed to do a part of the project, is not brought in on the project in a timely fashion and then they are scrambling to get the work done through no fault of their own.

It can be frustrating for people to see ideas, projects, plans they have suggested ignored, only to see them followed when others suggest them later on.

On the job training
When new staff are trained by other staff who didn't do the job before or where there is no procedure manual for the job there is no way the new person can ever get the proper job training. This lack of continuity just make those doing the job less and less effective over time.

This library is extremely dysfunctional and an example of an unhealthy organization. Long-term staff have very little job knowledge and very little understanding of core concepts of higher eduction and academic libraries. Library Administration micromanages and stands in the way of success by operating from a basis of fear and unwillingness to take risks. Performance appraisals of faculty and staff do not happen consistently, if ever. No one knows where they stand, and efforts to make things better are routinely shot down or just plain ignored. This library is well behind the times in terms of technology and resources, and it's not just an issue of our poor funding; it is a problem compounded by exceptionally poor leadership. New people here are almost always shocked and appalled at the problems that long term people have acclimated to or have simply given up on trying to change.

Does this library inspire me? No! However, I am inspired by the individuals within this library; they keep me going when my strength wavers. What really motivates me is my own tenacious desire to do a good job. I love libraries; they are my endless source of knowledge, growth and fun.