

Report of the Organizational Climate Task Force

UMass Amherst Libraries

November, 2009

Introduction:

The mission of Organizational Climate Task Force (OCTF) is to continue the conversation that began with the completion of the ClimateQUAL Survey in 2008. We believe that all library staff members share the desire to improve the working environment of our Libraries. Most employees who were surveyed said that they take pride in a job well done and that their Library work is meaningful to them. We begin by acknowledging that we have much to be proud of - there are many beneficial and positive aspects of the working environment of the UMass Amherst Libraries.

I. Background

In March 2008, the UMass Amherst Libraries participated in the ClimateQUAL survey, with over 77% of staff completing the survey. Analysis of the survey results revealed several areas of concern to staff, including:

- Disparity in the treatment of classified staff compared with other staff
- Supervisory concerns, especially in supervisors' treatment of staff
- Opportunities for continual learning
- Issues of diversity
- Top down decision-making with little input from staff

To address these concerns and work toward improving the organizational culture of the UMass Amherst Libraries, the Organizational Climate Task Force was formed in April, 2009.

Membership: Emily Alling (through Aug., 2009), James Borkowski, Luke Doubleday, Elizabeth Loving, Sue Lychwala, Thomas Paige (chair), Lisa Persons, Scott Stangroom, Carol Will.

Organization of the Task Force: The nine member Organizational Climate Task Force (OCTF) has met a total of 20 times as a full group over the last 7 months. As we grappled with the challenge of building consensus among nine individuals, we decided that much of our work could be assigned and managed by smaller subgroups, which also met periodically and reported their work to the larger group as needed.

What does a healthy organization look like?

On Nov. 18, 2008, Assessment Librarian Rachel Lewellen made a presentation at the Libraries' All Staff Meeting to review the results from the ClimateQUAL survey. In that presentation, she provided the following list of indicators of organizational health:

Healthy Organizations:

- Value employee diversity and fairness
- They have policies and practices that emphasize the importance of employee education and innovation
- Staff members feel their work matters to the organization

Task Force Charge:

Identify possible strategies to address issues and concerns raised in the 2008 ClimateQual survey:

- Use a variety of discovery methods to gather ideas on how to create an organization with a high level of satisfaction and success
- Identify methods for gathering additional information directly from staff (may include focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Examine the interpretation and administration of work environment policies and practices (for example, Children in the Workplace policy)
- Explore ways to recognize staff contributions (may include creating oral histories, looking at recognition models employed by local businesses, etc.)
- Write a report with recommendations for how the Libraries can address organizational climate

II. Research and data gathering

Report review

In preparation for its work, the group began by reviewing the following documents:

1. The qualitative results report generated by ClimateQUAL/OCDA
2. The report created by the Libraries' Assessment Committee
3. Several supplemental articles about organizational health
4. SMG Minutes from December 2008 discussing the ClimateQUAL survey results

Review of ClimateQual Results

The Qualitative Results report of the ClimateQUAL survey identifies several overarching themes in the responses: *"One theme is the expressed opinion that immediate supervisors treat their staff poorly throughout all levels of the library. Another theme that emerges across scales is that classified staff members are treated in a drastically different way than other employees. Finally, a prevalent theme throughout survey responses was that employees feel that decisions are always made from the top down and that they have little input in decisions that affect them or their jobs."*

Early on, the group invited Assessment Librarians Rachel Lewellen and Gordon Fretwell to provide their analysis and to help us to review and interpret the results of the ClimateQual Survey.

Some of the recurring themes gleaned from these results:

- Perception that classified staff are not treated as well as professional staff and that some immediate supervisors treat staff poorly. Employees want the opportunity to evaluate their supervisors for the benefit of the organization

- Perception of uneven or inconsistent support for continual learning and staff training opportunities - employees feel classified staff are given fewer opportunities for continual learning relative to librarians
- Perception that employees feel performance reviews for classified staff do not allow for appropriate recognition of hard work
- Perceptions of lack of diversity, and diversity awareness, in the workforce
- Perception that the climate for facilitating teamwork and forming teams is good but that the climate to allow teams to actually accomplish their goal was lagging
- Perception that decisions are made from the top down with little input from staff

Assessment Librarians' Analysis and Suggestions

- Responses differed by department in statistically significant amounts in several categories, and these differences should be considered
- All information collected by the Task Force should remain confidential
- The Task Force might begin by conducting informal meetings with staff members to solicit suggestions and comments
- Continued participation and "buy-in" from staff will be critical to the perceived relevance and validity of the Task Force's findings
- Given the variety of issues involved, the Task Force should include recommendations for ongoing processes, including re-iteration of assessment, to address these issues

Organizational Change Workshop: The Organizational Climate Task Force worked with the Labor/Management Workplace Education office to offer two 1.5 hour introductory workshops entitled "When Everything Changes: Responding to Organizational Change" - for library employees on July 7 and July 9. The group agreed to help organize this workshop on short notice as a staff activity during the week of the Aleph ILS upgrade. The essence of this workshop was to provide positive coping mechanisms when faced with 'change'. Despite generating some useful input the attendee feedback indicated a need for a more library-specific program, so our group recommended against extending this brief workshop into a more expansive series. Workplace Learning and Development already provides generalized workshops which are available to individual staffers. Other alternatives include library focused workshops provided through ARL, ACRL or Lyris in terms of serving our specific needs.

Staff Questionnaire

The Task Force discussed whether additional feedback from staff was needed, given the externally reported ClimateQual Qualitative Results and our own Libraries' Assessment Committee's internal analysis of the quantitative data. The group decided that we needed additional input from staff, including opinions and suggestions about how the Library might address staff concerns that have so far been identified. Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were deemed essential. We decided that an online survey would best suit our purposes, and would allow for anonymity of participants.

A subcommittee was formed that developed a questionnaire for staff members, which was reviewed and revised by the entire committee. Rachel Lewellen and Emily Silverman were consulted to advise the group on delivery method and question wording. We settled on using the Survey Monkey online survey tool and tested the questionnaire on the original (non-member) volunteers for the taskforce.

Our staff questionnaire solicited suggestions to address the major areas of concern identified in the Task Force's charge and in the Executive Summary of the ClimateQUAL- 2008 Qualitative Results for University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Six questions were focused on:

1. Disparity in the treatment of classified staff compared with other staff
2. Supervisory concerns, especially in supervisors' treatment of staff..
3. Opportunities for continual learning
4. Issues of diversity.
5. Top down decision-making with little input from staff
6. Additional suggestions

This survey ran for two weeks from August 24 - September 8, 2009 with advertisement via email and LibWire. There were a total of 45 respondents with each of the six questions generating around 35 responses each. After collecting the responses, the responses were split between two smaller Task Force subgroups, each summarizing the suggestions received. After this step was completed the Survey Monkey response data was deleted.

The summary of the responses to the staff survey questionnaire can be found in:
Appendix B - Libraries Staff Questionnaire Response Summary.

Feedback from other Institutions

ALA 2009 ClimateQUAL meeting report: Dianna Williams, the Libraries' Assistant Director for Human Resources, reported back to the Task Force about the ClimateQUAL group meeting at the July, 2009 ALA conference regarding the activities of other Libraries that had participated in the ClimateQUAL assessment.

Key points:

- Some institutions have not shared their results with their staff
- Some haven't done anything with the results yet
- Some are struggling with what to do with the data

- The Univ. of Maryland did focus groups, and collected testimony from staff. Their findings: a growing need to focus on staff education and training
- It is not recommended that past participants repeat the ClimateQUAL survey for at least four years after the initial survey

Dianna Williams also shared with us the article “Is Yours a Learning Organization?” (Garvin, Edmondson & Gino, 2008) from *Harvard Business Review* that was endorsed favorably at the ALA ClimateQUAL group meeting:

The authors define a learning organization as a place where employees excel at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge. They identify three building blocks of such institutions:

1. A supportive learning environment - Characteristics include:
 - Psychological safety - Discouraging a culture of blame and focusing on support for inquiry and improvement
 - Appreciation of differences - Opposing views are given fair consideration
 - Openness to new ideas - Encourage risk taking in proposing new approaches
 - Time for reflection - Overstressed schedules inhibit the ability to review processes analytically and creatively
2. Concrete Learning Processes and Practices - Knowledge is shared systematically. Proficiency is measured in clearly defined ways.
3. Leadership that reinforces learning - A willingness to entertain and explore alternate points of view encourages employees to offer new ideas and options.

Institutional Questionnaire: The Task Force decided to proceed with gathering information from peer institutions. A subcommittee of the Task Force was formed that designed a questionnaire (see Appendix A) for other unionized institutions identified by Dianna Williams: the University of Connecticut, the Univ. of California Irvine, and the University of Maryland. Of these, Maryland and UConn participated in ClimateQUAL. At these libraries multiple methods were used in addressing concerns raised by the ClimateQual findings including hiring a consultant, assigning each library department to develop plans of action around the Climate Qual results and setting up project teams to develop specific recommendations for senior leadership to approve and implement.

The summary of the responses to the Institutional Questionnaire can be found in:

Appendix A: Institutional Response Summary

III. Observations, Causes and Suggestions

It should be stressed that the UM Libraries exhibit many characteristics of a healthy organization. An External Review Team Report dated December, 2007 stated that “A robust organizational culture that has been transformed by the leadership of Jay Schafer. Jay and his senior staff have created an environment which engages in transparent decision-making and communicates well to all librarians and staff. The staff themselves use the term ‘transformative’ to describe the changes that have occurred in the last few years.”

Some observations of Task Force members after completing our research and data gathering:

- Merit, promotion and hiring policies are pertinent to our charge
- Awareness of potential unintended negative impact of our recommendations (create more work and/or dissatisfaction)
- Recommendations must take into account the impact on the organization given the understaffing and budget issues
- Support from upper management is critical to this discussion

Task Force as focus group

The Task Force membership represents staff from a broad cross section of Library departments, services, job titles and union representation. Our report represents an independent organizational self-study. Because of the sensitive and confidential nature of the data that we collected from staff, we chose to act as our own focus group in terms of evaluating our research and response data. Our goal was to clarify and list the perceived causes and suggested solutions for the primary issues of concern based on the feedback from staff and other institutions. We held several intensive “whiteboard” brainstorming sessions after reviewing and summarizing the results of our research and data gathering.

These sessions allowed us to review and categorize the responses and suggestions we received within the context of our other research and the ClimateQUAL response data. This helped to focus our analysis of the issues. What follows is a summary of our Task Force's focus group sessions, categorized by issue:

A. *Perceived Supervisory Concerns/Treatment of staff*

Causes:

- Inconsistency in treatment of staff: Some Classified staff feel they are not treated as well as Professional staff
- Inconsistency in application of policies: a) within departments, and b) between departments
- Time pressures – meetings and committee work – supervisors lack time to effectively address supervisory issues

Suggestions:

- Training for supervisors in management, personnel, and supervisory skills
- Need support from the administration
- Mentorship program for staff
- Regular review of policies
- On-line Library policies FAQ
- Require supervisor evaluations by staff
- Allow student staff to evaluate student supervisors
- Training in team leadership
- Create a Supervisory Development Task Force to address this issue in detail

B. *Perceived lack of opportunities for Continual Learning and Staff Development*

Causes:

- Lack of time
- Lack of permission
- Lack of funding
- Lack of comprehensive new employee orientation program
- Lack of comprehensive career ladder program
- Content not relevant to job

Suggestions:

- Internal staff conference or In-Service Day - to share knowledge, help foster community and collegiality among all staff
- Comprehensive new employee orientation program – providing an overview of Library operations in all Departments
- Career ladder staff development and training certification program
- Professional development speaker series utilizing on-campus resources, i.e. School of Management and School of Education faculty or graduate students

C. *Perceived issues related to diversity*

Causes:

- Lack of information on policies/procedures
- Lack of supervisory training
- Lack of cultural awareness
- Recruitment emphasis
- Patron and student staff diversity vs. staff diversity (or lack thereof)

Suggestions:

- Video – Diversity series – to stimulate topic-centered discussions
- Policy review for supervisors and staff
- Use on campus resources for advice on recruitment

D. Perception of decision making that comes from the top down with little input from staff.**Causes:**

- Time factor is an issue, need to act quickly
- Soliciting input is not always appropriate
- Lack of communication about decision making processes

Suggestions:

- When possible, before decisions are made that impact staff jobs:
 - Communicate issues, rationales, deadlines, problems
 - Solicit input and solutions
 - Communicate details of decision made in a timely fashion
- Ongoing education about our organizational structure and decision making.
 - Ongoing review of other academic libraries' structures and processes
 - On line anonymous staff suggestion box on Libwire directed to Staff Council and/or SMG for consideration

IV. Analysis

The creation and independence of this Task Force speaks volumes about our collective willingness to explore change and pursue the holy grail of "creating an organization with a high level of satisfaction and success." Some would say that we already are that organization, that we have made substantial progress. Some point to the state job classification system, campus HR policies or the unions as major, potentially insurmountable obstacles to progress in certain areas. Others lament that open dissent is counterproductive to our core mission of supporting the learning and instruction of our students, and that we'd all do well to simply be more considerate of one another.

The ClimateQUAL results, staff feedback and information gathered from other libraries share a clear and common thread: That the lack of effective merit incentives and a well defined, competency-based promotion and job classification program on campus are detrimental to our organizational health. While there are other concerns that are more easily addressable, this is especially relevant to classified staff members who feel that "the only way up is out." There is no doubt that the current economic downturn and budgetary constraints contribute to limiting promotion opportunities. Are we losing experienced, highly skilled classified staffers to other units on campus because the skills, knowledge and competencies of those individuals have outstripped the grade level of their job descriptions? Awareness of the apparent obstacles presented by existing University promotion and classification policies and collective bargaining agreements should not prevent conversations that shed light on the limitations of those policies, and should not preclude investigation of better alternatives. This is especially true if we are to retain and develop broadly skilled employees who can thrive in the future.

There are widespread perceptions within the Libraries that we lack certain prerequisites to achieving our goal of "creating an organization with a high level of satisfaction and success."

These are:

- **A comprehensive, ongoing library-specific supervisory training and development program.**
- **A mechanism for mentorship, peer support and workplace advocacy for classified staff.**
- **A career ladder model for classified staff development, promotion and evaluation that is based on demonstrated competencies not stated job duties.**
- **Routine public recognition of staff accomplishment by department heads.**

We found several programs at other academic libraries which we feel are useful examples of initiatives that address and enhance organizational climate:

UMass Medical School Library's 'Levels' program - a competency based development, training and advancement level program for library support staff. UM Medical Library implemented a cross training initiative in conjunction with a new career ladder program for non-librarian staff. This was developed in collaboratively with Administration, HR and Union input. This program has three staff grade levels whose specific skill and proficiency attainment levels align with those defined in the staff training matrix and are reflected in newly revised staff job descriptions. (Fama & Martin, 2009) See Case Study 1 in **Appendix C**.

University of Maryland Libraries' Learning Curriculum, launched in 2001, is a comprehensive learning and education plan of over 150 content hours that focuses on individual and organizational development. It is a plan for all library staff to develop the skills needed to become members of teams and to improve the way they operate as an organization.

Dartmouth College Libraries' Internal Staff conference: For staff/by staff. An internal staff conference is not only a great way for staff to share information about their work and interests - it can be a good low-cost morale booster that fosters a sense of community and collegiality within the organization. (Thompson, 2009) See Case Study 2 in **Appendix C**.

Oregon State University Libraries' annual In-Service Day has been similarly successful since planning was taken over by staff and changed focus to feature staff presentations. (Hussong-Christian, Kunda & Rempel, 2009)

Keene State College's Mason Library launched a popular staff monthly video series centered on diversity topics. The films helped stimulate topical discussions, based on examples from media. Diversity training generates buy-in when organized around conversations about books, speakers and films as a common frame of reference. A diversity series of short films and videos (owned by the library) for library staffers is low cost and 'do-able'. (Herold, 2009)

V. Recommendations

A. *Supervisory Concerns and Treatment of Staff*

1. Supervisory Development Task Force: We recommend that the Libraries should strongly encourage, if not require, ongoing supervisory and managerial training and development for all professional and managerial staff focused on collegial management, mediation skills and team leadership techniques. All supervisors, including Librarians, should be evaluated on their supervisory skills during the annual review process. According to the ClimateQUAL summary, employees want the opportunity to evaluate their supervisors. Staff members believe that supervisors with deficiencies should be required to attend supervision skills classes. At the University of Maryland Libraries an in-house training program is under development to address desired core competencies for supervisors. The Supervisory Development Task Force would be charged with conducting a thorough review of supervisory and managerial training practices, assessing the need for ongoing managerial development, and addressing the feasibility of creating a staff supervisory evaluation mechanism. This group could also draft a *Supervisory Code of Conduct* for the Libraries.

Implementation: Creation of Task Force at the discretion of the Director of Libraries and approval by SMG.

2. Staff Workplace Support and Advocacy Group: Assess interest in creating an informal group, with a designated volunteer facilitator, to provide and promote peer mentorship, confidential support and advocacy. This would not usurp Staff Council's role as the official advocacy mechanism for staff. Rather, this group could provide a channel of communication to Human Resources, Staff Council and Administration to provide suggestions to address matters of workplace climate.

Implementation: At the discretion of the Director of Libraries, under the advisement of the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Staff Council.

3. Comprehensive New Employee Organizational Orientation program which provides a broad department by department overview of the Libraries operations and introduces the new employee to co-workers from other departments. The Libraries' Community, Diversity and Social Justice Action Plan states that we should "Establish (a) program of in-depth departmental orientations for both professional and classified staff. This may initially be targeted to new and transfer staff." This plan states that "Divisions and Departments" are responsible, however it can be interpreted to mean that these orientations need only be restricted to the employee's department.

The University of Maryland Libraries conduct orientations based on employment classifications (faculty, classified staff, graduate students and undergraduate student workers). The orientation is divided up into three sections, payroll and policies, department policies and a library overview. Each presentation in the overview is done by the person functionally responsible for each area.

Orientation should be a systematic, organization-wide effort, and should be documented. New employee orientation should begin with Human Resources, as it does now, but it should not end there. The employee's direct supervisor should be required to provide introductions to all other department supervisors (and a selection of departmental staff as deemed appropriate), and

arrange for departmental orientations. The overall result would be a series of brief departmental overview sessions conducted by each department's supervisor or designee. We recommend that an orientation checklist be developed by HR with the cooperation of department heads. This checklist would require signoff by each department head certifying that they (or their designee) have provided the departmental orientation.

Implementation: At the discretion of the Director of Libraries, under the advisement of the Assistant Director of Human Resources and the approval of SMG.

B. Opportunities for Continual Learning and Staff Development

4. Annual Internal Staff Conference Staff designed / Staff presented informational programs aimed at improving awareness of others' work and interests, providing cross-training, and entertaining forums for staff learning and engagement. In addition to providing staff with the opportunity to share their particular talents, work routines and interests, this type of program would serve as a morale booster and to promote organizational awareness. This is low cost, and should be planned for a day during intersession or summer. Allow staff members at least one-half day to attend morning or afternoon sessions

We recommend that a dedicated volunteer committee be formed to oversee the organization and preparation for the conference, with advisory oversight from Staff Council Training Committee. This conference could require up to one year in advance planning and preparation. The first conference could be considered a "pilot".

Dartmouth College Libraries' Internal Staff Conference and Oregon State University Libraries' In-Service Day program could serve as useful examples. Key elements:

- Short Presentations - 25-45 minutes
- Invite provost/campus officials to observe as a means of promoting Libraries' mission
- Topics could include anything of interest to staff from gardening to digital preservation
- Provide public speaking workshop before conference for presenters
- Morale builder

Implementation: By a designated Staff Conference committee, at the discretion of the Director of Libraries. Under the advisement of the Assistant Director of Human Resources, Assistant Director for Administrative Services, Staff Council Training Committee and approval of SMG.

5. Form a Task Force to study the feasibility of a career ladder development program for classified staff. We recommend that this group be charged with studying the feasibility of implementing a Staff Certification Level Learning and Skills Curriculum that is linked to considerations of promotion and merit. Evaluate the obstacles to gaining institutional and union approval for a *Career Ladder Development Program*. This group could study existing career ladder development models at UMass Medical School Library, UConn and Auburn University. Each of these institutions overcame considerable hurdles in gaining approval for implementation. University of Maryland Libraries' Learning Curriculum program is a comprehensive learning and education plan of over 150 content hours that focuses on individual and organizational development. This topic deserves further investigation that is beyond the scope of our charge. We strongly

recommend that this Task Force advise the Libraries on how best to open a dialog on this topic with University Administration, campus HR and the union(s) involved.

Implementation: Create an investigative Support Staff Career Ladder Development Task Force at the discretion of the Director of Libraries and with approval by SMG under the advisement of the Assistant Director of Human Resources

6. Staff development faculty speakers series: Collaborate with faculty to put together low cost professional development programming. Examples: a) Invite a faculty member from the Communications Department to collaborate in providing a workshop on Public Speaking for those who are planning presentations for the *Internal Staff Conference*. b) Invite faculty from the School of Management to present a workshop on Leadership and Work Teams.

Implementation: Liaison Council with approval from the Director of Libraries.

C. Diversity Awareness and Recruiting

7. Monthly video diversity series for staff: Diversity training generates buy-in when organized around conversations about books, speakers and films as a common frame of reference. We recommend a monthly series of short (< 60 min.) topical films modeled on the Keene State College Libraries series. Allow time for staff to attend.

Implementation: Social Committee, Reserves, Media, Microforms staff, at the discretion of the Director of Libraries.

8. Faculty and student diversity speakers series: Collaborate with faculty to put together low cost diversity awareness programming. Invite faculty and students from diverse backgrounds to speak about their cultures and heritage.

Implementation: Liaison Council with approval from the Director of Libraries.

9. Solicit external resources for diversity recruiting: The Libraries' Community, Diversity and Social Justice Action Plan states that "we should encourage minority applicants for vacant positions through targeted advertising and personal contacts". There may be additional resources on campus - through other departments, through various outreach programs, and through union representatives, that may be able to advise us on attracting candidates. One suggestion: Consult and collaborate with campus offices that have more diverse staff for recruitment ideas. Another: Announce position openings in list-serves and other media that serve diverse groups. There are restrictions on position announcements that require on campus distribution first. Ask Unions to assist us in promoting diversity in recruitment when positions open up.

Implementation: Ongoing. Assistant Director of Human Resources and search committees, at the discretion of the Director of Libraries.

10. Promote use of the term "Paraprofessional" as opposed to the term *non-professional*, *classified*, or *clerical* when referring to Library support staff.

Implementation: Voluntary, by department and individually.

D. Staff Input on Decision Making

11. Online Feedback Mechanisms: Create an anonymous electronic suggestion box - a continuous feedback mechanism for staff, so that soliciting feedback about Organizational Climate issues is ongoing. Utilize online form to communicate questions, concerns and suggestions – to be responded to by designated groups (Staff Council, SMG, Committees). Each of these groups could have a feedback link on LibWire to an online form. This process would help address concerns about inconsistencies in the treatment of classified staff (or any staff), concerns of a supervisor's treatment of a staff member, concerns about training opportunities, diversity issues, the library's decision making process, or an issue that is of immediate concern to a staff member.

Implementation: Systems, with the approval of SMG, Staff Council and support of participating committees.

E. Other Recommendations:

12. Departmental reports of accomplishment (periodic) that acknowledge and publicize staff contributions to successful completion of projects, training, certifications, and team efforts. A brief summary, posted to Libwire monthly or quarterly, to highlight individual accomplishment as well as group initiatives.

Implementation: Department heads, at the direction of the Director of Libraries.

13. Streamlined meeting schedules: Use meeting times efficiently to discuss important pressing issues. Use e-mail for sharing information. Time is a scarce resource, value others' time as you would your own. Many staff members commented on the need to streamline committee work and reduce meeting commitments. This Task Force is well acquainted with this issue!

Implementation: By consensus. (Should we schedule a long meeting to discuss this?)

14. Reiteration of Assessment: Review new programs to evaluate success or to allow them to end if necessary. As for the ClimateQUAL assessment, we recommend a second survey no earlier than 2012, as part of an ongoing commitment to measure and improve our organizational climate.

Implementation: At the discretion of the Director of Libraries in consultation with Assessment Librarian(s) and SMG.

VI. Conclusion

We recognize the fact that this report cannot possibly address all issues that exist in the library working environment. We have outlined specific remedies and recommended ongoing processes to help address issues that affect the organizational climate in a more open and healthy manner. The efforts of the OCTF reflect the opinions of its members, as well as the suggestions of the Libraries staff members that filled out the OCTF on-line questionnaire.

We wish to thank the staff members who responded to our questionnaire for their time and effort, and for the creative and constructive suggestions offered. Within the group, each of us has gained a broader shared perspective of the challenges we face as an organization. We would also like to thank those outside the group who contributed to our efforts, and extend our appreciation to Jay Schafer, Director of Libraries, for his patience and for supporting our independent inquiry. The submission of this report represents one step in the continuing efforts to enhance and improve the library's work environment.

Respectfully submitted:

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Luke Doubleday
Elizabeth Loving
Sue Lychwala
Thomas Paige (chair)
Lisa Persons
Scott Stangroom
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Appendix A: Institutional Response Summary

Questionnaires were sent to three other ARL member libraries. All Universities had some unions on campus; University of Maryland and University of Connecticut participated in Climate Qual. The questionnaire was sent to the ranking HR official or equivalent administrator at each Library after initial phone contact to determine willingness to respond. The respondents were:

University of Maryland: Jane Williams, Director of Planning and Administrative Services

University of California at Irvine: Deb Sunday, Assoc. University Librarian, Admin Services

U. Conn: Barbara Cervera, Staff and Org. Development Librarian Liaison for Educational Leadership

We solicited responses to 10 questions about these organizations. These are noted in bold, along with a summary of the responses we received:

1. Assuming you reviewed your Climate Qual findings, how did you then address areas of concern?

Multiple methods were used in addressing concerns raised by the Climate Qual findings including hiring a consultant, assigning each library department to develop plans of action around the Climate Qual results and setting up project teams to develop specific recommendations for senior leadership to approve and implement.

Note: Not applicable to University of California at Irvine

2. Did you address organizational structure as a result of Climate Qual outcome? If so, how is your organization developing or changing? Changes in organizational structure, if made, were motivated by strategic plans or changes in function, not as an outcome of the survey.

3.

a. Did you revise any policies or practices as a result of Climate Qual? Policies and practices are being revised or have been revised as a result of recommendations made by the Climate Qual task forces and approved by senior leadership.

Note: Not applicable to University of California at Irvine

4. Does your Library employ managers who do not have a professional Library degree? If so, in what capacity? All libraries have managers without degrees in Library Science in their IT departments, HR, Facilities Management, and Development. University of Connecticut Libraries has a head of Circulation/Reserves that does not have an MLS.

5. Does your Library conduct Orientations for new hires (or even existing staff)? If so, can you describe your program? All three libraries conduct orientations for their new hires. The difference in the programs is broad. University of Connecticut libraries has half day orientation conducted by the university and in-house orientations performed by team leader; University of California at Irvine libraries has online power point modules and presentations held throughout the year that encompasses the history of the university and libraries and organizational functions within the libraries. The new employees also receive a library employee handbook. University of Maryland Libraries conduct orientation based on employment classifications; e.g. faculty, classified staff, graduate students and undergraduate student workers. The orientation is divided up into three sections, payroll and policies, department policies and a library overview. Each presentation is done by the person functionally responsible for each area.

6. Does your Library provide mentoring for staff? If so, is it offered to both Professional and Classified staff? Please describe: Only University of Maryland Libraries had a formal required mentoring program for professional staff without permanent status. The mentor is chosen by the mentee or assigned by a Mentoring Committee.

- 7. If you offer training to managers or supervisors, what is the level or type of training offered?** Libraries take advantage of the supervisory training run by their respective campus-wide training departments. An in-house training program is under development at the University of Maryland Libraries to address desired core competencies for supervisors. University of Connecticut requires training for their 'team leaders'; but not all supervisors.
- a. **Is the training mandatory?** No.
 - b. **Is it available to everyone? Just Librarians? Managers? All staff?** Available to everyone by request.
 - c. **When and/or how often is training offered?** Frequency varied from yearly to each semester.
- 8. Does your Library require staff to conduct any sort of annual review of policies?** Only University of California at Irvine Libraries offered yearly Whistleblower and Harassment policy reviews. Others did it as needed.
- a. **Do you hold "in-service" days for training and/or policy review? If so, how often and how long are such sessions?** None of the libraries surveyed held any "in-service" days although University of Connecticut Libraries held various policy workshops for library supervisors and employees.
- 9. What are some of the ways your Library recognizes staff contributions and accomplishments?** All three university libraries had length of service awards. University of Maryland libraries and University of California at Irvine libraries also had monetary awards given to outstanding employees. Decisions were made by peer review.
- 10.**
- a. **Do you offer incentives or rewards? If so, what sort?** Merit increases for classified staff are set by the universities or by union contract. Faculty and professional staff merit increases are determined by relative performance.
 - b. **Are there Promotional Opportunities?** All qualified staff are eligible to apply for any open position. Some higher level positions are filled by appointing current staff to 'acting' then hiring them permanently.
- 11. What restrictions could prevent you from implementing programs aimed at improving your Organization's Climate?** University of Maryland Libraries cites workload, morale and attitude as a result of high vacancy rates and budget reductions as reasons for holding off on implementing new programs. University of Connecticut libraries and University of California at Irvine libraries site union contracts and university and state regulations as restrictions.

Appendix B - Library Staff Questionnaire Response Summary:

On August 24, 2009, the Organizational Climate Task Force released an on-line questionnaire via Survey Monkey to all Library staff. This was advertised by email and on the Libraries' intranet. This was not intended to be a scientific survey, but rather a way of gathering input. Staff members were invited to provide feedback to the group in response to open-ended questions soliciting suggestions. The introduction to this survey included the following statement from the Task Force:

In March 2008, 77% of staff completed the "ClimateQUAL" survey and the results revealed several areas of concern, focused mainly on these five major topics:

- Inconsistency in the treatment of classified staff compared with other staff.
- Supervisory concerns, especially in supervisors' treatment of staff.
- Opportunities (or lack thereof) for continual learning.
- Issues of diversity.
- Decision-making that comes from the top down and provides little opportunity for input from all staff.

The Organizational Climate Task Force seeks your **suggestions** on how to address these concerns. Please give us your suggestions by completing the survey below.

This survey is **anonymous** and includes 6 boxes for suggestions. Your suggestions and ideas will be used to help us make recommendations aimed at enhancing our Organizational Climate. Only the Task Force will have access to the full text of the survey responses, and will determine which suggestions to include in our recommendations. Staff suggestions will be edited to protect the author's anonymity.

Respondents were allowed two weeks (until September 8, 2009) to complete the survey. In total, 45 Library staff members responded - a 33% response rate. The Task Force was strongly committed to protecting the anonymity of respondents and the confidentiality of individual responses. As such, the group decided not to report the full text of the individual responses, but rather to summarize the primary themes and suggestions of respondents on each topic. These responses were reviewed, edited and summarized by the Task Force and were not shared with anyone outside this group. This was one of our most challenging and time consuming tasks, but one we felt worth the effort.

Many of the suggestion points were raised by multiple staff members, and some by only a single individual. Since we viewed this only as a tool for gathering suggestions, we did not attempt to follow any sort of rigorous methodology for tabulation. We assumed, as our prerogative, the right to report these suggestions based on their relevancy to the topic, rather than their frequency overall. In reviewing and reporting the responses to each question, our firm goal was to remain neutral and summarize the suggestions rather than to evaluate or prioritize them.

What follows is this Task Force's summary of our respondents' suggestions for each concern:**Question 1: Please give suggestions that address inconsistency in the treatment of classified staff compared with other staff.**

Provide more training for classified staff and allow release time to do this.

Support development and advancement of classified staff through learning opportunities.

Include more classified staff on committees that pertain to their work and on search committees.

Allow classified more input on issues.

Consider funding for support staff to join and participate in professional organizations.

Provide clearer policies for treatment of staff by supervisors.

Allow greater flexibility in work hours.

Hire non-librarians for management positions.

Supervisor evaluations should include staff input as to effectiveness, fairness, and communication skills.
Work with unions collaboratively to improve policies. Educate more about the unions and union differences.
Provide classified staff similar privileges to professionals, such as flexible hours.
Recognize classified staff for their skills and education - Trust and respect staff regarding their work.
Provide a system of merit increases to recognize accomplishments and encourage professional growth.
Provide a more clearly defined process for job advancement to prevent drain of talent.

Question 2: Please give suggestions that address concerns about supervision, especially in supervisors' treatment of staff.

Require formal training for supervisors – to include conflict resolution, mediation skills, coaching, and morale building.
Provide supervisors and employees ready access to private space for confidential matters.
Encourage better communication through staff meetings.
Discipline managers and supervisors who mistreat staff.
Allow supervisor evaluations by employees - supervisors need regular feedback.
Provide an internal (to the Library) advocacy mechanism for staff who are experiencing conflict - and appoint a designated advocate for employees experiencing conflict.
Hire people with management experience - encourage hiring of non-librarians as supervisors.
Make a mentoring process available for all staff members - not just MSP Librarians.
Require every department to use the LibWire Calendar.
Emphasize consistent and fair application of policies and procedures.

Question 3: Please give suggestions that address availability of opportunities for Continual Learning:

Offer workshops:

- Online
- Foreign Language
- Brown Bag w/snacks
- In-house by staff
- Off site
- Other Libraries
- Cross Training

Encourage and allow staff to attend these workshops.
Promote feedback and sharing of information from staff who've attended workshops.
Promote workshops on Libwire and highlight the benefits.
Support adequate training budget (when possible).
Develop training programs in relation to Library goals and priorities.
Shift responsibility of Continual Learning programs out from HR.
Create incentives and recognition for completing training successfully.
Host more conferences and workshops.
Expand travel program to all staff for training/learning and include a range of subjects.

Establish a method for requiring training topics.

Offer Continual Learning in smaller increments (less than 23).

Support training in context of merit, reclassification and promotion with involvement of Unions.

Question 4: Suggestions that address issues of diversity

Speak up when witnessing or hearing a discriminatory action or statement.

Celebrate WEB DuBois' birthday instead of holidays - Celebrate diverse holidays.

Support more openness of LGBT identities and awareness.

Recruit more diverse professional and classified work force:

- Announce position openings in list-serves and other media that serve diverse groups.
- Consult and collaborate with campus offices that have more diverse staff for recruitment ideas.
- Communicate with Unions and Campus Administration about the need to bypass on-campus job pools to go off campus in recruiting people of color. Announce when a position is targeted by Whitmore.

Conduct regular diversity training for all staff.

Create a Diversity Resident position.

Reinstate Diversity Committee.

Question #5 – Decision making that comes from the top down

More emphasis on existing mechanisms for feedback – through SMG and Staff Council, feedback through supervisors and at all-staff meeting.

Provide a generic email address for governing groups to allow staff to communicate issues directly.

Set up an on-line form to give feedback to SMG anonymously.

Leaders make decisions. Some decisions are not always popular - and not all decisions can be reached by popular consensus. Some of the reasons for dissatisfaction have moved on. Leadership and climate for staff input has improved considerably - and we need to keep moving further in that direction.

Encourage the Director to continue to meet periodically with staff groups from each department to hear their ideas for re-organizing the Library. Last spring's meetings were viewed favorably should continue in the future as one way of reviewing and assessing the new organizational setup.

Let staff know at what level specific types of decisions are made - some types of decisions need to be made quickly at an executive level. The director provides opportunities for staff input when he is able - this is much better than used to be. Realistically, final decisions have to come from the top.

Allow staff to speak up in venues less intimidating than the all-staff meeting. There is fear of reprisal from some quarters for publicly questioning decisions that have been implemented, even in an appropriate forum, and being branded as negative or disloyal. A healthy organization must be open to self-critique. Administrators should move further to embrace this kind of culture.

Avoid asking staff for input if a decision has already been made - this fosters cynicism. Major decisions should be re-assessed systematically to allow for a change of course or reversal if needed.

Encourage all administrators to communicate their decisions directly to support staff and through all staff meetings whenever possible and not just through supervisors and Dept. heads.

Explain to staff the reasons for a decision especially when input was solicited.

Let staff know before a decision is implemented, and reiterate the rationale for these decisions and commit to assessment and re-evaluation if they don't work out.

Articulate goals and request feedback from staff as to how to achieve goals.

Review new programs to evaluate success or to allow them to end if necessary.

Administration should meet with smaller groups of staff at least once a semester.

Administration and committees solicit feedback from staff at all levels and present feedback to the higher group.

Promote an open door policy for the Director.

Be more proactive with staff - more management by walking around.

Provide a staff suggestion box and address items at all staff meeting.

Include more public service staff on SMG – change the make-up.

Question 6: Additional suggestions about an issue (or issues) of great concern to you not covered by the previous five major topics.

Promote awareness of family issues and commitments.

Provide greater staff support, such as ombudsperson/mediator.

Decrease committee work and meetings.

Provide more time for those working on initiatives.

Appendix C: Case Studies

Case Study 1: The Lamar Soutter Library

Abstract: Jane Fama and Elaine Martin. "One Model for Creating a Career Ladder for Library Support Staff". *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 35, no. 5, (2009):, 475-481.

In this article, Jane Fama, Associate Director of Library Operations and Elaine Martin, Director of the UMass Medical School Library, described their successful implementation of a career ladder development, training and advancement program for library support staff.

As the UMass Medical School's Lamar Soutter Library (LSL) embarked on a plan to cross train library support staff to take on new roles, the need for a higher level support staff member with the ability to handle functions in multiple areas of the Library became evident. They began a year-long strategic planning process in which all staff participated. As they did so, a major theme emerged: "Support staff wanted a way to develop and grow into their newly defined jobs... yet (they) had no way to advance in the current personnel system." In response, the Management Team of LSL developed a new support staff model that includes a combination of training across library functional areas, promotion and evaluation criteria.

Academic libraries nationwide face similar issues to those confronting the LSL, a medium size medical library. Therefore LSL's model could benefit other types of Libraries, not just academic health sciences libraries. LSL employs 22 support staff and 23 professionals with MLS or other advanced degrees.

In 2003 the 3rd Congress on Professional Education (COPE III) meeting focused on Library support staff. ALA executive director Keith Michael Fiels said, "We need to stop ignoring our support staff; instead we need to train them, we need to recognize them."

In 2004 members of the Tennessee Library Association Paraprofessional Roundtable conducted a survey to identify support staff issues. The five major concerns identified were: 1. Compensation not appropriate to the level of education, 2. Career ladders lacking, 3. Little access to continuing education or training opportunities, 4. Lack of paraprofessional certification program, and 5. Lack of recognition for contributions.

Prior to LSL's initiative, they researched three academic libraries, the libraries at Auburn University, Vanderbilt Medical Center and the University of Connecticut, that reported developing alternative career ladders that created promotional pathways for their support staff.

The LSL career ladder program, aptly called the Levels Program, offers support staff an opportunity to develop, train, and advance in multiple areas of library work. The program is structured around three components: education, years of service and cross-functional training. The new model for the LSL career ladder program can be simply expressed by the formula: Education + Years of Service + Cross Functional Training = Promotion.

Cross functional training does not mean that staff are simply trained to do a variety of library tasks. Cross functional training refers to a matrix of intertwined sectors called Areas of Responsibility, Competencies, Achievement Stages and Frameworks. Areas of Responsibility correspond to library functional areas.

Competencies refer to the knowledge and skills that define librarianship as it applies to support staff regardless of their assigned area of responsibility. The LSL managers identified 5

competencies: supervision, leadership and initiative, critical thinking and problem solving, distinctive knowledge and skills, and commitment to service and community. Competencies map to Achievement Stages. There are three Achievement Stages — Developing, Accomplished and Mastery.

For example: Training was divided into four Basic Skills Sets for the service desk area:

- Functional Job Skills - Communication, procedures & policies. Used role play.
- Library Basic Skills - ILS, Web search and resources, accessing databases.
- Team Skills - Triage skills and role play (also very appropriate for student assistants)
- Microsoft Office Skills - Self evaluations first assessed individual proficiencies. A skill set matrix then established existing proficiency level, and training was planned accordingly.

Each stage requires increasing competency or skill and knowledge. At minimum, all staff members are expected to both demonstrate the competencies defined in the accomplished stage within their assigned area of responsibility and demonstrate competencies at the developing stage in other functional areas of the library in order to reach promotion.

In some cases, shadowing was used for training, in other cases staff completed online tutorials. Classes were established for Basic and Advanced Training. Attendance was required. The specific evaluation technique is dependant on the type of skill being assessed: behavioral, process or knowledge based. Evaluation consisted of Certification Exercises, observation, opportunities for re-evaluations and through case study, and a staff Jeopardy style "Game Show" event with prizes. There were three major players for whom approval was necessary before the library's career ladder program could become a reality — the Union (the support staff at LSL are unionized), UMASS Medical School Administration, and the Human Resources office of the Medical School.

We interviewed the authors to ask about the approval and implementation process for the LSL Levels program. According to Jane Fama, it took two years of negotiation with the Union (the support staff at LSL are unionized), UMASS Medical School Administration, and Human Resources to gain approval for LSL to institute a new grade level system which was based on defined competencies and achievement stages and not just on duties listed in a job description. Elaine Martin emphasized that this denotes a shift from narrow specialization to a system of broad generalized cross functional training which ultimately provides the library with greater flexibility, higher overall levels of competency, and enhanced job satisfaction. Duty rotation enables teamwork on a cross functional level without the burden of cross functional representation. Current employees were given the option whether to opt in to the new system, but all support staffers are required to participate in cross training. This means they are "safe" at their existing grade level, but that they forego any opportunity for advancement if they choose not to opt in. New employees are required to participate. Only two employees decided not to opt in. Ms. Fama also recommended that the involvement of an Employee Assistance Program representative to counsel and advise staff about facing this change was an enormous help.

Case Study 2: Dartmouth College Libraries' Internal Staff Conference

An internal conference is not only a great way for staff to show their stuff and share information about their work and interests - it can be a good low-cost morale booster that fosters a sense of community and collegiality within the organization.

With 180 staffers in nine libraries, Dartmouth decided to organize an onsite Internal Staff Conference event. Key points:

- Include all staff and be held onsite one full day during intersession.
- Libraries remained open.
- Allow all staff 1/2 day to attend either morning or afternoon sessions.
- Be low cost and showcase work being done within their Libraries.
- Department heads were asked to submit ideas from their staff for presentation topics.
- Staff development committee oversaw submission and selection of presentation topics. A dedicated committee was formed to handle event coordination.
- Multiple simultaneous sessions, 25-45 minutes long.
- A mix of library topics and topics of outside interest were included.
- Coffee/tea available morning and afternoon.
- Public speaking/ Presentation preparation seminar available in advance for presenters.
- 12 Session topics were selected. Some included video as part of their presentation.
- Committee worked closely with Administrative and Building Services during planning.
- Invited Provost's Office contacts and other "external stakeholders" to attend.
- Used existing facilities and materials, kept supplies cost to a minimum. Total cost: less than \$300.
- Participation was not mandatory but over 50% of staff participated.
- Morning sessions had better attendance than afternoon sessions. Lunch sessions not popular.

Dartmouth Libraries' Internal Conference was created for staff, by staff. An internal staff conference requires extensive planning and coordination to be successful. The more staff that participate in planning and presenting, the more interest there will be.

Source: Presentation by Lora L. Thompson, Director of Management Services, Dartmouth College Libraries, "Inspiring Ideas: Dartmouth College Library's Internal Staff Conference", *Dartmouth College Biomedical Libraries October Conference*, October 9, 2009.