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# Scope of Work, Roles, and Responsibilities for Academic Librarians: Tenure-Track vs. Non-Tenure-Track Professionals

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this multi-institutional study is to determine how many academic libraries have chosen to institute a two-track system for their librarians: tenure-track faculty and non-tenure-track faculty. It will approach this inquiry in a two-fold manner, first with a survey questionnaire sent to library deans or directors of research libraries and then with the collection and analysis of formal policy documents from these libraries defining the expectations and work of librarians on the two tracks. This study will highlight how these tracks are distinctive in terms of the scope of work, workload, and other related factors and the implications for the development of the profession. Results of this study will add to recent research and perceptions of librarianship and higher education by providing an understanding of how these factors influence the organizational culture of academic libraries.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Tenure has never been more threatened in academia. The culture of accountability, budget austerity, public scrutiny, and institutional assessment have resulted in a questioning of the tenure system across campuses and an intolerance for any deviation from established principles and organizational norms. This is no less true in academic libraries that have continually had to justify the status of librarians as faculty, with or without tenure, in an effort to make meaningful and strategic contributions to the missions of their institutions. Libraries and academic institutions are living in a constantly changing world, influenced by political, technological, economic, and social drivers. Welch and Mozenter (2006, 165) reported that “data on staffing patterns in higher education confirm that full-time

non-tenure-track appointments have been increasing whereas tenure-track positions are declining in all fields with the exception of business and engineering.” The increase in the number of positions of faculty status without tenure, across different institutions around the United States, contributes to a dual-track system and the perception of inequity and elitism, evident within the same institution and even in the same library (AAUP 2018). This disparity continues to call into question the professional identity of librarians, particularly when workload and salary are not differentiated between the different categories of librarians in the same library, let alone in the same department. Librarians may be working alongside colleagues who have a different status or are on a different track with little distinction in credentials, expertise, responsibilities, or compensation.

In 1878, Sawtelle argued that librarianship is a form of professorship as it requires great skill to navigate the vast variety of subject areas covered by academic libraries in order to assist and guide students to those resources that would benefit them the most (162). While librarians have been granted faculty status and, in some cases, tenure at various academic institutions over the years, implementation has been highly inconsistent. It was not until the 1969 American Library Association (ALA) annual convention in Atlantic City that the Committee on Academic Status of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) presented to the association membership the goal of achieving full faculty status for all academic librarians, proposing a set of standards for faculty status. By 1971, the modified standards for faculty status for College and University Librarians were approved by the members of ALA (Herbison 1971), and it has given librarians a benchmark for assessing whether academic librarians have faculty status or not and describes different ways in which faculty status for librarians may be equivalent to the faculty status for teachers at any academic institution across the United States (ACRL 2011).

While the ACRL standards have been used as a framework in several studies over the years, there is, admittedly, a more universal standard defining tenure and, in turn, academic freedom: the American Association of University Professors and the American Association of Colleges and Universities created the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, which asserts that

tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security, hence, tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society. (AAUP 1940)

In essence, tenure is the right to freedom (and free speech) in the classroom (or library) and in research, and it provides protection from termination.

The AAUP formally recognized the status of librarians with the ACRL's 2012 *Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians*, which states, "Faculty status entails for librarians the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty. They should have corresponding entitlement to rank, promotion, tenure, compensation, leaves, and research funds" (ALA 2012).

Almost fifty years after the ACRL standards were approved, approximately half of all American four-year colleges and universities consider librarians as faculty rather than as administrative or professional staff (Walters 2016a). Despite the establishment and validation of the standards, the debate over faculty status has continued; as Galbraith, Garrison, and Hales (2016, 82) state, "library science literature generally makes subjective assumptions about the pros and cons of the faculty status argument, relying on author opinion rather than exploring the relevancy of faculty status to librarians and librarianship as a whole." Those who want faculty status have argued that they are educators who have scholarly interests and knowledge similar to other teaching faculty members (Werrell and Sullivan 1987). Others, such as Shapiro (1993), have argued against faculty status, believing that the work of librarians is fundamentally different from that of teaching faculty members. McGowan and Dow (1995, 345) state that "the basic tenure and promotion constructs of teaching, research and service do not readily apply to library practice." They make the case that librarians may be the equivalent of clinical faculty from a medical perspective where "reference service may be compared to patient care" and catalogers analyze, categorize, and describe similar to radiologists or pathologists (348). Some librarians believe that active and regular participation in research and publication helps to improve academic "librarians' subject knowledge, keep them engaged with the research literature, give them a better understanding of empirical research methods, and build professional affinity between librarians and regular faculty" (Walters 2016b, 817). Axford argues that academic librarians are eager and willing to accept equal status of faculty; however, some are not willing, or perhaps in some cases, are not able to fulfill the faculty expectation to produce scholarship. This expectation is critical since academic librarians with faculty status are not only measured by the same performance criteria as teaching faculty (teaching, research, and service) but are also subject to the same review procedures (Axford 1977).

Despite this ongoing debate, one factor remains constant: that it is the library administration in conjunction with the academic institution that decides whether librarians should be granted faculty status or tenure (Freedman 2014). Without the support of the administration in the library or in the institution it serves, faculty status will never be the standard for academic librarians. The lack of support can also lead existing faculty status to be slowly and quietly phased out as new positions are filled without

having faculty status, a growing national trend (Lawrence and Galle 2011). Given the influence of university and library administrations on the status of librarians on academic campuses, it is not surprising that there continues to be “little uniformity among institutions regarding what faculty status for librarians actually mean[s] (McGowan and Dow 1995, 349).” This inconsistency also creates greater confusion and ambiguity for librarians. Bolin (2008, 220) believes that due to this variability,

a candidate for a faculty vacancy in an academic library cannot assume that “faculty” implies rank, tenure, participation in governance, a publication requirement, and so on. It might have any, all, or none of these things and still be a “faculty” position. Conversely, it might have all of them in some form, and be a staff position.

Gray and McReynolds (1983, 283) did an early survey of directors that indicated that there was “confusion and variation as to how faculty status is defined” from both those with faculty status (though not all with academic rank) and those who did not have academic status. Walter’s (2016a, 165) study indicated “52% of responding institutions grant nominal faculty status to librarians,” which underscores the questions around how it is defined. With so many variations in the titles involved, there is a lot of obfuscation. Freedman’s (2014) article reported that 54% of respondents had professional/administrative status, while only 24% had full faculty status and tenure. This variation underscores the nuances at play, both in the survey and in the way in which status is framed at individual institutions. Vix and Buckman (2012, 22) did a longitudinal study over 2007, 2009, and 2011, asking deans and directors “if librarians at their institution had ‘some type of faculty status.’” Their results indicate a marginal upward trend.

Hosburgh (2011) believed it rare to see the ACRL standards implemented fully at any academic institution. His belief was validated by a recent study by Duffy and Webb (2017) that assessed the adoption of the ACRL tenure and promotion standards in southeastern universities. Their study addressed each component of the ACRL standards, surveying library deans and directors as well as academic librarians. Interestingly, they did not parse the data based on managerial level, which might have made for some telling discrepancies. According to their survey results, 59% of respondents were subject to tenure policies; however, “while each institution has adapted some of the standards, no one has adapted all of the standards” (341). Bolin (2008) analyzed academic library web sites, examining several criteria from the ACRL standards as well. She indicated that “the co-occurrence of professorial ranks and tenure is almost without exception” as was the presence on faculty senate (227).

While some academic libraries have institutionalized tenure track for their librarians, others have done the opposite, moving their librarians and professionals off the tenure track into a clinical, academic professional, or

other nontenure tracks. In fact, some academic libraries that had previously moved their librarians off the tenure track, changed back again—and vice versa. There are several case studies published detailing the impact of a specific institution moving from one to track to another (or back again) (Cieslicki 1982; Reber 1997). Hill (1994) described the return to tenure track for one academic institution, “after a six-year hiatus,” and the considerations taken into account in assessing a librarian for tenure. She discussed the shift where “under prior standards, 80 percent of a Libraries’ tenure decision was based on the ‘practice of librarianship’” to a model where tenure is based on 40 percent librarianship; 40 percent research, creative, and scholarly work; and 20 percent service (71).

A third group of institutions have attempted to take advantage of the benefits of both models by employing both tenure and non-tenure-track librarians. Martin (1993) proposed a two-track model as a way to accommodate both those looking for “career advancement and professional status” and those simply interested in a 9-to-5 job. She believed that libraries could use a model where “career advancement and full professional status would be available to Professional Librarians who contributed to their own professional growth; Occupational Librarians would be evaluated on their 9-to-5 job performance” (24). However, this approach has prompted even more anxiety as the distinction between the two tracks is not always clear, particularly when considering workload in the similar areas of responsibility (typically librarianship and service), salary differences, and other procedural justice issues that may arise. Gilman (2008) discussed various models of academic librarian rank, including nonfaculty tracks, in his article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

While the literature abounds on questions of status and tenure for librarians, there is less attention paid to how that status relates to the functional or operational responsibilities within librarianship; the distribution of effort between librarianship, service, and/or research; differentials in workloads or expectations and distinction in terms of rewards and pay; or reappointment and promotion among librarians in those academic libraries with a two-track faculty model.

## PURPOSE AND METHOD OF THIS STUDY

Using a survey method, the authors will examine academic libraries that have instituted both tenure and nontenure tracks for their librarians. The study seeks to identify how the scope of work, roles, and responsibilities are differentiated between the two tracks. Working under the reasoning that faculty status with tenure is arguably more relevant for institutions with a research mission, the authors chose the study population by drawing from libraries at Carnegie R1, R2, and R3, using the 2015 classifications, which was current at the time of the study. It will approach this inquiry in a two-fold manner: 1) with a survey questionnaire sent to library

deans or directors of research libraries and 2) with the collection and analysis of formal policy documents from these libraries that describe the expectations and work of librarians on the tenure and nontenure tracks.

The comparative analysis of the collected data will examine the areas of responsibility on each track in terms of librarianship, research, and service; the difference in comparative workload between the tracks in each area and overall; any functional or operational areas within librarianship specific to one track or the other; the role of technical or subject expertise on each track; whether there is any distinction in the terms of rewards and pay or reappointment and promotion among the tracks; the perception of issues faced by the two tracks; and what the population of each track is within the institution compared to five years ago.

This study will address the following questions:

- Q1= Are Carnegie R1, R2, and R3 (as of 2019, doctoral/professional universities) academic libraries moving toward a two-track librarian faculty model and if so, in which specific functional/operational areas within librarianship?
- Q2= Do librarians in those academic libraries with a two-track librarian faculty model have different areas of job responsibility and workloads?
- Q3= Is there any distinction in terms of rewards and pay or reappointment and promotion among librarians with different statuses in those academic libraries with a two-track librarian faculty model?

In the course of answering these questions, the results may also provide insight into the trends within academic libraries and the implications for the future of the profession.

This study takes a mixed-methods approach, comprised of two methodologies for data collection: first, a survey of institutional library leadership and then, an analysis of policy documents related to tenure and faculty status. The study method and survey were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board.

The authors began this study by identifying 334 doctorate-granting colleges and universities in the United States classified by the 2015 Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education as “Highest Research Activity” (R1), “Higher Research Activity” (R2) and “Moderate Research Activity” (R3). This group of institutions was deemed by the researchers as the most inclusive group of institutions, and the decision to focus on research activity was made based on the assumption that such institutions would be more likely to have research libraries and librarians who would be working with researchers and more likely to have tenure. Once the 333 institutions were identified (omitting the authors’ own institution), information was gathered about each library included: the library’s website URL; the name of the person leading the library, along with their title; website location; and email address. The researchers then invited,

by email, prospective respondents to participate in answering the survey. Separate emails linking to separate but identical surveys were sent out to each group in order to be able to track the Carnegie type and maintain anonymity as much as possible. Participation in the study was voluntary, and no personally identifying data was collected.

The survey questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions and was completed using Qualtrics™ survey software. The questions were comprised of open-ended, closed-response, and rating-scale questions, as well as a request to upload faculty policy documents. The survey was designed to collect descriptive data about the types of librarian tracks found at the respondents' institution and whether these tracks are differentiated in terms of work scope, workload, and other related factors. See Appendix 1 for the complete finalized survey instrument.

The second part of this study involved the qualitative analysis of formal policy documents collected from respondents. In order to consistently analyze the formal policy documents, the researchers used a grounded theory approach and developed a codebook. Given that the policy documents provided by respondents for analysis had identifying institutional information, it was impossible to maintain anonymity in that part of the study, although the authors are committed to preserving the confidentiality of respondents as much as possible. As it happens, the Carnegie classifications were also updated in a draft just after the survey was sent out; while it is not possible to update the institutional classifications for the survey portion of this study, the authors were able to do so for the policy analysis.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Twenty-eight respondents completed the survey for their individual institutions, for a response rate of 8.4% (figures 1 and 2) and, of those 28, 8 institutions provided documents for the policy analysis. In some cases, a respondent answered the questions for more than one track if the institution had multiple tracks for their librarians. This was unexpectedly low and, given that the survey was opened and started by respondents from 103 institutions, may indicate that there was an initial intent to complete the survey. There is no way of knowing why they did not choose to complete it, but the attrition is notable. The response rate is low, particularly for a quantitative study, but the focus on the policy documents informs the climate on this issue. Of the 23 public institutions who responded, 7 of those were also unionized. The data on academic libraries with unions is noted as collective-bargaining agreements may define or inform policies on workload and other terms of employment.

Respondents indicated the status of librarians at their institutions, categorizing by tracks. While the majority of institutions noted only one track, five responding institutions reported having three or four tracks present in their libraries (figure 3). Of the institutions responding to the survey,

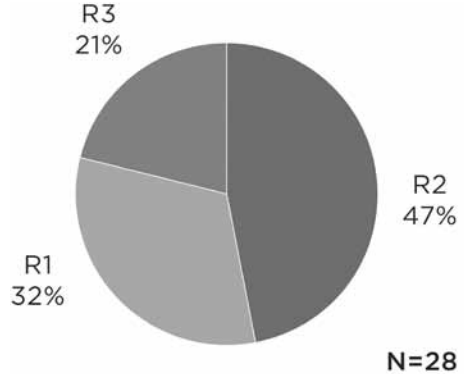
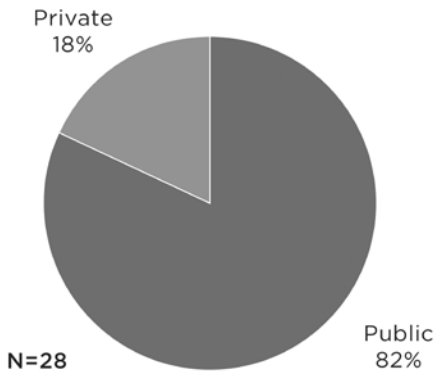


Figure 1. Respondents by institution type

Figure 2. Respondents by Carnegie Classification

there were 11 institutions with librarians on the tenure track and on at least one of the nontenure tracks. There was no pattern identified in the institutional respondents.

While there were 11 institutions with librarians on the tenure track as well as having librarians on at least one other nontenure track, not all of those institutions submitted their policy documents. One institution indicated that they were in the middle of revising their guidelines, and 2 others did not make them available to the researchers. Therefore, the policy analysis examined documents from 8 institutions. One point of interest is that all of the policy documents examined came from a range of R1, R2, and R3, although they were all public institutions. In a few cases,

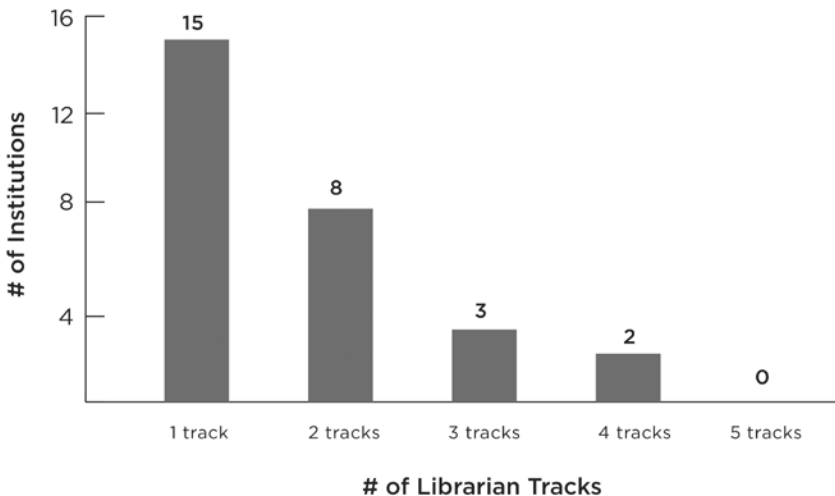


Figure 3. Number of librarian tracks reported



there were multiple documents uploaded: with policy documents addressing one track or another (or multiple), documents specific to the libraries or applicable to the entire institution. None of the reporting institutions provided any employment contract or collective-bargaining agreements, although some respondents did mention being subject to such agreements. Given the low response rate in the survey, the authors considered gathering publicly available policy documents to augment the data but decided, for purposes of transparency of process, to use the data provided by the respondents only.

While the literature called attention to the ACRL *Joint Statement of Faculty Status of College and University Libraries* and the ACRL *A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Librarians*, reference to these documents within the policies was surprisingly sparse: only 2 institutions expressly refer to them by name.

It should be noted that in many cases, there was no specific policy for the non-tenure-track librarians. They were either covered by the general library policy or they were not explicitly mentioned. It is likely that the non-tenure-track faculty were governed by institutional- or university-level policies, but these were neither provided by respondents nor examined in this study.

Considering the models adopted by academic libraries, there is a noticeable change within the past five years, with a slight shift away from tenure track to contingent or other (figure 4). The total number of librarians (for all tracks) reported by respondents for 2018 and five years prior was almost identical: 48 and 49, respectively. The number of librarians on each track for each institution changed over time, with an increase in the number of contingent faculty and “other” librarian positions and a corollary

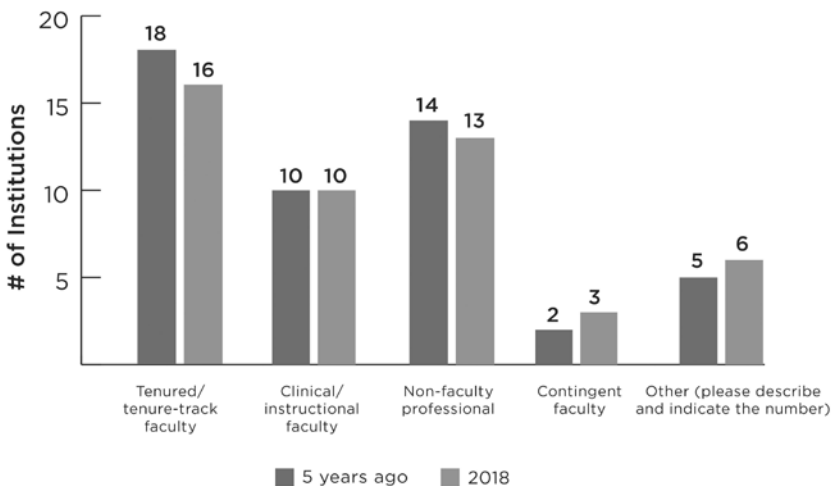


Figure 4. Library employment by institution, 2018 vs. five years ago

decrease in the number of librarians on the tenure track and nonfaculty professional librarians, or librarians who don't have faculty status. Clinical and instruction faculty librarians remained largely unchanged. One of the responding institutions indicated a loss in tenure status for librarians. Policies from two institutions articulated grandfather clauses:

Until 2009, professional librarians were hired (with several exceptions) as tenure-track faculty. Since that time, all professional librarians have been hired as fixed-term appointments. All "grandfathered" tenured faculty remaining on staff as of 2014 have attained the rank of Professor and will be subject to post tenure review policies. Evaluation is the same for both tenured and fixed-term faculty; with the sole exception that tenured faculty members are expected to engage in scholarly endeavors as an element in post tenure review. (Public Carnegie R2)

These revised guidelines apply to all [institution deleted] Libraries faculty. Libraries faculty working toward promotion or tenure at the time of this revision have the option to request that guidelines in place at the time of their initial appointments be used as the criteria. (Public Carnegie R1)

This shift from tenure-track positions to nontenure track has been gradual, occurring at the point that positions are created or posted rather than in a sweeping organizational change. However, there have been disheartening exceptions (Kreneck 2017).

Consistent with this shift in tracks, there has been an increase in the number of titles, particularly on the nontenure track. The majority of the ranks for nontenure tracks are fairly consistent, with four institutions making use of a lecturer ladder comprised of instructor, lecturer, senior lecturer (or senior instructor). One of the Institutions actually has senior instructor as a provisional rung on the tenure track. This title is described as follows: "Faculty with less than two years professional experience may be appointed at the rank of senior instructor with the explicit understanding that after two years of service they undergo a review that will result in either transfer to the tenure track at the rank of assistant professor, or to a terminal contract." The titles Librarian I, II, III, IV are also used for both nontenure and tenure-granting positions. The most commonly used designations on the tenure track were assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. One institution made use of the professor titles for the nontenure track, using the modifiers of clinical or instructional.

Looking at the terms of employment or permanency of the position as indicated in the policy documents, it should be noted that three institutions were subject to collective-bargaining agreements, which were not provided for review, and were not easily found by the authors, but undoubtedly impact the terms of employment. One institution made an explicit distinction between the terms of employment for tenure track vs. nontenure track in their policy documents, indicating that "those on the librarian [nontenure track] ladder (Assistant Librarian, Associate

Librarian, and Librarian) are issued annual contracts; therefore it is possible to change rank when a new contract is issued.” This institution followed a tenure process and timeline for those librarians on the tenure track. Other institutions were also very clear about fixed-term or “permanent status” for librarians:

The terms and conditions of every appointment to the Library Faculty shall follow the policies and procedures in the University Faculty Handbook as this pertains to fixed-term appointments. (Public Carnegie R2)

One institution referred to a “permanent-status commitment” that was “different from tenure” wherein the

decision to remove an employee must be made by the President . . . and justified by cause as defined by [the institution] and campus policy. . . . The only faculty ranks which may involve a permanent-status commitment are Librarian II, Librarian III, and Librarian IV and such other ranks as the Board of Regents may approve. . . . Appointments of faculty librarians who do not have permanent status may be terminated for cause under policies and procedures that apply to non-tenure track faculty. (Public Carnegie R2 #2)

As an indication of the perceived importance within the profession of the master’s of library science as a terminal degree, the policy documents were examined for the reference to an MLS/MLIS and whether it was a requirement for hiring in the institution. All but one of the eight institutions included specific mention of the MLS/MLIS in their policy documents. Several institutions have some ambiguity in the MLS/MILS requirement, depending on the track:

Lecturers should have the terminal degree appropriate to the field or should be otherwise well-qualified to practice librarianship. (Public Carnegie R1 #1)

Initial appointment as an Assistant Professor shall require that the individual hold the Master’s degree from a school of library science accredited by the American Library Association. . . . An exception may be made if an applicant possesses an advanced degree in another field or has comparable experience in addition to a bachelor’s degree which makes her or his expertise especially valuable to the position being filled. (Public R2 #3)

The majority of institutions were more categorical about the requirement of the MLS:

The master’s degree in library and/or information science from a library program accredited by the American Library Association is the appropriate terminal professional degree for academic librarians.

In the overwhelming number of instances, the professional graduate training required is an M.L.S. degree, which is considered the terminal degree in the practice of academic librarianship, from the American Library Association (ALA)-accredited program.

According to ACRL policy, the terminal degree for appointment as a faculty member is considered to be a Master of Library Science from an institution accredited by the American Library Association (ALA).

The merit of a second degree was addressed by 4 of the institutions, with 2 of them indicating a specific requirement for higher ranks on the tenure track: "Associate Librarian rank requires an earned master, specialist or doctoral degree, in addition to the master's degree in library or information science." The other two institutions acknowledged the value of a second graduate degree as professional development or continuing education, exemplified by this statement from one of the policies: "Involvement in continuing education activities, such as formal courses, seminars and workshops, as well as advanced degrees obtained or in progress will be considered in promotion."

More general professional development was included in the policy documents for five institutions, described in varying lengths from brief mentions of training or the availability of travel funds to more detailed descriptions:

They have participated in continuing education in the form of academic course work, pertinent workshops, degree programs, institutes, or conferences. (Public Carnegie R1)

Involvement in continuing education activities, such as formal courses, seminars and workshops, as well as advanced degrees obtained or in progress will be considered in promotion. (Public Carnegie R2 #2)

Continuing professional education (status of doctorate if not conferred; post-graduate or post-doctoral work at a university; training received in workshops and non-university courses). (Public Carnegie R2)

Reported salaries ranges from the 28 institutions varied widely by track (table 1). Looking at the policy documents, salary terms were specifically mentioned by only 1 institution with the steps for promotion defined as 8% for associate professors and 10% for full professors. However, this institution, similar to the other institutions surveyed, did not specifically address salary for contingent or non-tenure-track faculty. From the data in table 1, the reported salary for contingent faculty is much lower, which may be expected as contingent faculty are often paid on a limited term basis and may, in effect, be part time.

Overall, in looking at the 28 institutions reporting the workload breakdown by track, the percentage of effort allocated to the categories is identical for tenure-track and nonfaculty professional, with librarianship at just under 70%, followed by research at just over 10%, then service at just over 10% (figure 5). That a tenure-track position, with the assumption that research is a significant component, has the same expectations of effort as a nonfaculty professional is significant.

Table 1. Reported salaries by track

|         | Tenured/<br>tenure-track<br>faculty | Clinical/<br>instructional<br>faculty | Nonfaculty<br>professional | Contingent<br>faculty | Other    |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Minimum | \$45,000                            | \$40,000                              | \$35,000                   | \$17,000              | \$52,000 |
| Maximum | \$75,000                            | \$65,000                              | \$70,000                   | \$55,000              | \$60,000 |
| Mean    | \$56,500                            | \$52,386                              | \$51,375                   | \$36,000              | \$57,400 |
| Median  | \$55,000                            | \$52,000                              | \$52,000                   | \$36,000              | \$58,000 |

The workload definitions as indicated in the policy documents were somewhat different. None of the 8 institutions reporting addressed any differential in workload or distribution of effort between their tenure-track faculty and their non-tenure-track faculty (figure 6). Only one institution indicated a difference in the distribution of effort between their untenured and tenured faculty in their policy documents: "The percentages assigned below to primary responsibilities (55% pre-tenure and 70% post-tenure), scholarship (30% pre-tenure and 15% post-tenure), and service (15%) represent the customary distribution of workload."

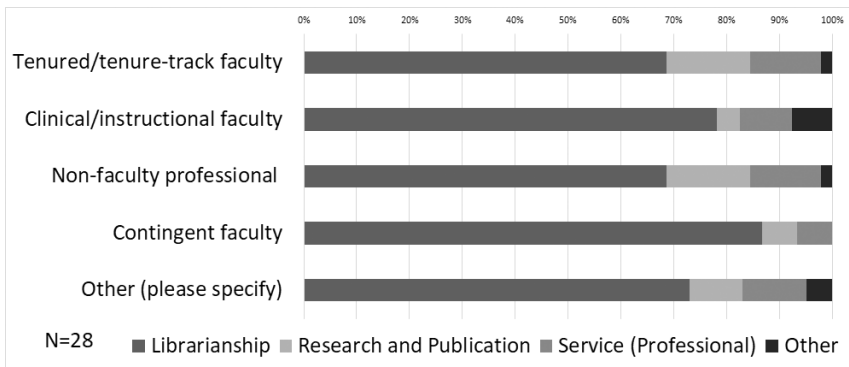


Figure 5. Mean allocation of work by track

Table 2 lists the allocation ranges for each track at one institution. While having an allocation range is not unusual in and of itself, it does seem unusual that based on these ranges, a librarian on the tenure track could have the exact workload breakdown as one on the nontenure (e.g., 80% librarianship, 10% scholarship and professional development, and 10% service). One institution's policy indicates that advising and general service is considered under service.

It is important to note that the emphasis on librarianship ranges from 55% to 80% effort for tenure-track faculty, as reported in their policy documents. This raises questions about the significance of research in tenure-track librarian positions when the effort on research has a mode of 10%. It

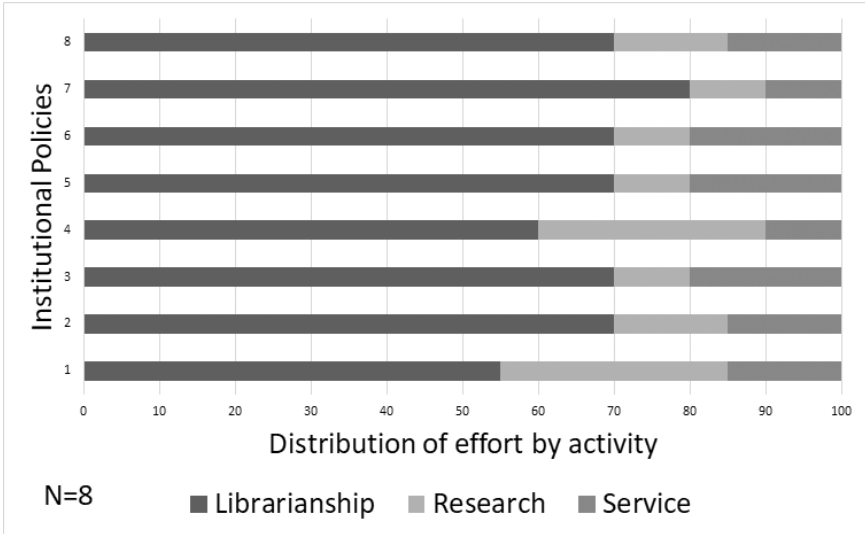


Figure 6. Distribution of effort

Table 2. Workload allocation example

|  | Tenure Track | Nontenure Track |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Librarianship                            | 70%–80%      | 80%–90%         |
| Scholarship and Professional Development | 10%–20%      | 5%–15%          |
| Service                                  | 10%–20%      | 5%–15%          |

may be argued that rigorous, meaningful research is predicated on more effort than it would seem that institutional libraries allow for. It would be interesting to study how the low distribution of effort in research correlates with research impact and, potentially, the awarding of tenure and/or promotion as wells as how it compares with the efforts of disciplinary faculty. There are no doubt implications for how this situation influences how disciplinary faculty perceive librarians and, indeed, how university administrators value their contribution to research and information discovery.

In the reporting of percent effort, there was no information in any policy document nor in the survey responses about what this looks like in terms of load or time spent. However, the policy documents do provide definitions and examples for librarianship, research, and service.

When defining librarianship, the majority of the gathered policies specified a variety of meanings, but most pointed to a librarian’s primary job responsibility as described in their job description or job assignments. One policy even equated librarianship with “teaching” other academic faculty members. Due to the potential differences of job assignments as

to what librarians do in comparison to teaching faculty, it should not be surprising to any librarian that there can be a blurring of librarianship, research, and service responsibilities. One policy from a Public Carnegie R1 even pointed out this issue, stating: "Librarianship is, by its nature, an applied, service-oriented, and highly collaborative field. This overlapping of responsibilities can make it difficult to clearly delineate the librarianship, research, and service components of any particular case."

However, the blurring of librarianship and service is prevalent in many of the institutional policies reviewed since librarianship is often equated to "assigned professional service," as was found in one policy. Such language can create greater confusion and might call into question why some librarians are granted faculty status at all, let alone with tenure.

Some policies have clearly identified lists of what could be classified as general tasks librarians would perform and professional competences as to what specialized tasks a librarian would be judged on for evaluation. One such policy, which seemed to echo other policies, identified the roles that librarians could engage in: "Instruction, Cataloging, Reference, Collection Development, Management, etc."

What was not surprising was that among all the policies gathered, the definition of librarianship remained the same or consistent between the tracks. Only three different institutional policies did not define librarianship for their clinical/non-tenure-track faculty.

Similar to librarianship, the definition of research and scholarship for librarians varied only slightly between policies. One policy states that it "is broadly defined to include research, scholarly and creative work." Others go into greater detail:

Research, scholarship, or creative activity reflect both activity and product or outcomes, employing dynamically interacting processes of discovery and creation, teaching and dissemination, engagement and application, and integration (Boyer, 1990). Products or outcomes developed through these processes are public, open to peer critique, and available for use by others. (Public Carnegie R2 #4)

Librarianship is an applied profession and, as a result, research often parallels a librarian's professional responsibilities and can blur the lines, creating confusion for those outside of the profession. Adding to this confusion, as seen above, allocating such a high percentage of effort to librarianship leaves little, if any, effort to devote to scholarship, begging the question as to how librarians can perform research when the majority of their effort is spent performing their librarianship duties. One policy acknowledged this issue: "Since the practice of librarianship is year-round and includes responsibilities between semesters and through the summer, Library Faculty members are generally able to devote a smaller percent of their workload to scholarship than librarianship." Nevertheless, despite the small portion of effort allocated to scholarship by librarians, tenure/

tenure-track faculty librarians are still held to the same promotion and tenure standards as their tenure/tenure-track teaching faculty colleagues. This leads to a more critical question: How can an equitable workload between tenure-track library faculty and teaching faculty be achieved?

Though service by faculty, regardless of rank or responsibility, is viewed as an essential component in the higher education environment, it is rarely seen “as important” as job performance and research. One policy defines service to “include administrative service to the university, professional service to the faculty member’s discipline, and the provision of professional expertise to public and private entities beyond the university.” Another library policy divided service into two types of service: “Professional Services” and “General Service.” General service is defined as being “carried out in various contexts including service to the university, to one’s profession, or to the broader community,” while “professional service to the broader community implies the use of one’s expertise and refers to work that draws upon one’s professional expertise and/or is an outgrowth of one’s academic discipline.” Upon close analysis, this policy places both administrative duties and librarianship under “Assigned Professional Service.” Another policy also mentions administration/management under service, stating, “Service is broadly defined to include administrative service to the university, professional service to the faculty member’s discipline, and the provision of professional expertise to public and private entities beyond the university.”

Professional leave was a defined benefit in the policy documents of three institutions; however, this was only for tenure-track faculty. One institution was vague about what professional leave might look like: “Use professional leave to participate in scholarly, faculty development, and service activities, with supervisory approval.” However, the other two institutional libraries were very explicit:

Library faculty are customarily expected to allocate thirty percent of their workload, or approximately six working days per month, prior to tenure and fifteen percent of their workload, or approximately three working days per month, to scholarly activities after receiving tenure. (Private Carnegie R2)

Two hundred hours of research time are available annually to full time tenured/tenure-track Faculty members for the pursuit of research and scholarship. (Public Carnegie R2 #3)

What is also interesting to note is where administration/management falls in the realm of task possibilities. Some library promotion and tenure policies place administration responsibilities clearly in service or librarianship. When this information is viewed in context with job duties, where administration is ranked in the top three duties for different librarian statuses (see above), it is not surprising to see the lines once again blurred between librarianship and services, causing greater confusion.



Adding to this confusion is the definition of service when it differs between the faculty tracks at the same institution. Although most policies use the same definition for service between tracks, one institutional policy lists traditional librarian activities—such as access services, automated systems activities, bibliographic organization and control, collection management/serials services, management effectiveness, and reference services—under service for its clinical/non-tenure-track faculty librarians, while for its tenure/tenure-track positions, these activities are considered contributions to the profession and/or library. These activities look similar to those of the teaching faculty: “Provides service to the library, university, profession, and/or community.”

All institutions articulated criteria for promotion or evaluation, which in most cases was a laundry list of activities under librarianship, research, and service to be considered. There was very little distinction in the activities or criteria for evaluation between the tenure track and nontenure track. One institution had a caveat about the awarding of tenure: “The most important criterion for awarding tenure is whether it is in the best interest of [the institution] to do so” (Public Carnegie R2 #4).

The survey respondents reported a variety of functional responsibilities. Overall, comparing tenure track vs. the aggregated data for all nontenure tracks, the ranking of results is not altogether inconsistent (table 3). Public service is most common, with administration being in the top three. The notable distinction is the presence of library instruction responsibilities on the tenure track, while the nontenure track has a strong showing for technology and web services.

When the rankings are broken down a bit more among the nontenure tracks, there were some notable distinctions between tracks. The ranking of the functional areas occurring the most frequently in tenure track vs. clinical/instruction vs. nonfaculty professional is shown in table 4.

Of the ten categories, administration was ranked highly for each of the three tracks reported. Note that contingent faculty and others were not analyzed because the numbers reported were too small. The emphasis on public service for tenure track may be related to the employment of

Table 3. Ranking of functional responsibilities, tenure vs. nontenure

| Ranking | Tenured/tenure-track faculty  | Non-tenure-track faculty  |
|---------|---|---|
| 1       | Public Service  | Public Service  |
| 2       | Administration  | Administration<br>Technology/Web Services/Systems                       |
| 3       | Instruction   | Archives/Special Collections<br>Scholarly Communication<br>Acquisitions |
| 4       | Archives/Special Collections<br>Cataloging<br>Scholarly Communication |   |

Table 4. Ranking of functional responsibilities, tenure vs. clinical vs. nonfaculty

| Ranking | Tenured/<br>tenure-track faculty   | Clinical/<br>instructional faculty                               | Nonfaculty professional  |
|---------|--|--|--|
| 1       | Public Service   | Administration   | Technology/Web Services/<br>Systems                                  |
| 2       | Administration   | Public Service<br>Archives/Special<br>Collections<br>Instruction | Administration   |
| 3       | Instruction  | Acquisitions<br>Cataloging                                       | Public Service<br>Archives/Special<br>Collections<br>Access Services |
| 4       | Archives/Special<br>Collections<br>Cataloging<br>Scholarly Communication |  | Scholarly<br>Communication   |

subject specialist librarians in academia. That the highest ranked category for clinical/instructional faculty is Administration raises some questions about how they may manage tenure-track faculty and how they might value research when it is presumably not a requirement of their own position. The nonfaculty professional focus on technology/web services/systems is probably not surprising, given that many libraries are bringing IT specialists and other experts in to manage their systems and software.

In response to the question, "If your library has both tenure and clinical tracks, how are the roles, responsibilities, and expectations between the two tracks differentiated? Please address work hours, work tasks, supervisory, etc.," the responses, anonymized per research protocol, were illuminating:

The roles are basically differentiated by workload and expectations. We want people on the instructor track to primarily focus on librarianship responsibilities.

NTT [nontenure track] or clinical faculty were initially brought on to fill operational roles. Recently, we have been being pressured to convert Tenure lines into NTT lines due to budget constraints and lack of agreement on the role of tenure-track librarians.

Tenure track librarians have a more rigorous expectation of scholarly and professional development activity.

Union contract largely differentiates workload. Tenure must engage in research and publication; clinical do not. Also, tenure can hold high-level administrative appointments, clinical cannot.

Tenured faculty are holdovers from a time that our school hired every librarian as tenure/track. When these three faculty members retire, our school will have no tenure track/tenured faculty, all will be fixed-appointment or clinical.

The analysis of the policy documents allowed a more granular look at institutional values. Mentoring was a criterion mentioned by two institutions, making no distinctions in expectations between tenure track and nontenure track: "Receives honor or award for conduct of job responsibilities or for mentoring/ advising activities," and "Serve as a mentor in a recognized mentorship program."

Only one institution explicitly incorporated integrity as a component or criterion: "Successful candidates should exhibit evidence of collegiality and professional integrity." However, another institution specifically cited the *ALA Code of Ethics* in its policies: "Excellence in Librarianship, Scholarship and Professional Development, and Service are defined to include professional ethical conduct, consistent with the *ALA Code of Ethics*." The same institution also explicitly articulated in its policies the protections of intellectual freedom, although it appears from the context that they are also intending it to extend to academic freedom: "Protection of intellectual freedom by shielding the faculty member from censorship." One other institution also includes academic freedom in terms of scholarship: "As a member of the academy, a library faculty member may choose to publish in their area of scholarly interest."

Addressing other professional values such as collegiality, there were three institutions that included such statements in terms of evaluating performance. One institution was very prescriptive in what the desired behavior looks like:

The Faculty Handbook indicates that effectiveness in interpersonal relationships, including professional ethics, cooperativeness, resourcefulness, and responsibility are standards of evaluation for faculty. Therefore, performance in collegiality and communication will be considered throughout the evaluation. The Libraries also values appropriate participation in departmental activities as an element of collegiality. The Libraries also affirms that collegiality does not preclude vigorous debate and dissent, which are vital components of a healthy intellectual environment, nor does collegiality require conformity to any personality profile or apply to the ordinary tensions that arise from conflicting individual sensibilities. (Public Carnegie R1)

Only about half of the institutions (4) included very clear, defined processes for tenure or promotion and even for evaluation. For those who did, the process included external review and a vote of the faculty. About half also had a defined time period or probationary period for review for tenure or promotion. The specific steps diverged enough that, with such a small sample, analysis provided no meaningful insights.

## CONCLUSION

As previously mentioned, close to a third of potential respondents started the survey, but only 8.4% actually completed it, and of those that completed the survey, even fewer submitted policy documents. In general, this small sample size makes it a challenge to draw overarching conclusions about

the state of tenure-track positions in comparison to clinical or non-tenure-track positions, but the findings of this study are consistent with the trend in higher education. Overall, while the total number of librarian positions remains stable, the number of contingent and “other” positions seems to be increasing at the expense of tenure-track positions—and nonfaculty professional positions to a lesser extent. Of the institutions responding, the number of tenure-track libraries decreased by approximately 12%, while, correspondingly, the number of non-tenure-track librarian positions increased by approximately 10%. For the numbers reported in 2018, the number of non-tenure-track faculty was twice that of tenure track.

As previous research has reported, there is little conformity for job titles—titles vary widely from institution to institution. The only consistent finding is that there is no consistency between how tenure-track and non-tenure-track positions are viewed between institutions. One surprising (or perhaps unsurprising) finding is that institutions themselves seem to have difficulty making firm distinctions between their own tracks—they either have quite a bit of overlap or no differentiation at all. When libraries themselves cannot distinguish themselves, it makes it even more difficult to reconcile their roles with other tenured faculty on an academic campus. Considering the functional operations areas distributed among tracks, it is significant that most respondents listed administrative roles for clinical and instruction tracks and nonfaculty professionals.

It is somewhat perplexing that there is a lack of specificity in the policy documents regarding either defined areas of responsibility for each track or specific workload distribution. Most were even unclear about whether research was an area of activity for nontenure track, although some survey responses indicated that there was the assumption of an increased librarianship load for nontenure track and that the tenure track “have a more rigorous expectation of scholarly and professional development activity.” This lack of definition within policy or transparency between the tracks with regard to workload and functional responsibility can only lead to confusion by librarians who are unclear as to the boundaries of their position.

Based on survey results, the highest salary reported by an institution belonged to the tenure track. A few other institutions reported differences between the tracks. However, several institutions listed the same salary for each track, and even fewer described any compensation differences between the tracks in their policy documents. With a sample size of only nine institutions and with such a variety of responses, it is difficult to draw a conclusion as to the overall state of compensation between tracks for academic libraries at large.

While this study does not conclusively address the questions it initially intended to answer, what is clear is that while there have been numerous studies and commentaries examining the many permutations of positions in academic libraries, this area is still ripe for further analysis and there are

any number of ways this research can be extended. Some areas for future research include the following:

- Sending out a similar survey to all academic librarians rather than just deans and directors, focusing particularly on workload and challenges between the various tracks in order to get a different perspective on the issues
- Comparing research expectations for tenure/non-tenure-track librarian faculty positions to the institution's output
- Similarly, comparing service expectations to participation in various libraries

After over one hundred years of opinion, research, and discussion, one thing is clear: we are no closer to disambiguating the difference between academic librarian positions, so the confusion and debate will continue on.

## APPENDIX 1

### Library Faculty Workload Survey

1. Please indicate the type of institution you work for (Check all that apply)

- Union  
 Public Institution  
 Private Institution

2. Considering the full-time faculty and professional librarians in your library, please indicate the number of librarians that are:

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty                    | <input type="text"/> |
| Clinical/instructional faculty                  | <input type="text"/> |
| Nonfaculty professional                         | <input type="text"/> |
| Contingent faculty                              | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (Please describe and indicate the number) | <input type="text"/> |
| Total   | <input type="text"/> |

3. Please indicate what the population of each librarian track was within the institution 5 years ago:

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty                    | <input type="text"/> |
| Clinical/instructional faculty                  | <input type="text"/> |
| Nonfaculty professional                         | <input type="text"/> |
| Contingent faculty                              | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (Please describe and indicate the number) | <input type="text"/> |
| Total   | <input type="text"/> |

4. Did your librarians have faculty status and then lose it?

- Yes
- No

5. Please indicate the entry level salary range for each librarian track:

Tenured/tenure-track faculty

Clinical/instructional faculty

Nonfaculty professional

Contingent faculty

Other (Please describe)

6. Please indicate the areas of job responsibility for each of the following librarian tracks at your institution (indicate the percentage for all that apply)

|                                | Librarianship        | Research<br>and<br>Publication | Service<br>(Professional) | Other                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty   | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Clinical/instructional faculty | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Nonfaculty professional        | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Contingent faculty             | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (please specify)         | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |

7. Please indicate the approximate workload for each of the following librarian tracks at your institution (indicate hours per week for all that apply)?

|                                | Librarianship        | Research<br>and<br>Publication | Service<br>(Professional) | Other                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty   | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Clinical/instructional faculty | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Nonfaculty professional        | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Contingent faculty             | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (please specify)         | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/>           | <input type="text"/>      | <input type="text"/> |

8. Please indicated with an "X" the types of job duties performed by each of the following librarian tracks (please choose all that apply)

|                                | Administration<br>(management of<br>branch library/<br>service/unit/staff/<br>faculty) | Access Services<br>(ILL, circulation,<br>reserves)           | Acquisitions<br>(Monograph,<br>serials,<br>electronic<br>licensing)      | Archives/Special<br>collections        |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty   |  |  |  |  |
| Clinical/instructional faculty |  |  |  |  |
| Nonfaculty professional        |  |  |  |  |
| Contingent faculty             |  |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify)         |  |  |  |  |
|                                | Cataloging<br>(Monograph,<br>serials, etc)   | Collection<br>management<br>(preservation,<br>shelving, etc) | Instruction<br>(for credit<br>tours,<br>information or<br>data literacy) | Public Service<br>(Reference, liaison) |
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty   |  |  |  |  |
| Clinical/instructional faculty |  |  |  |  |
| Nonfaculty professional        |  |  |  |  |
| Contingent faculty             |  |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify)         |  |  |  |  |
|                                | Scholarly<br>Communication<br>(copyright,<br>repository, etc)                          | Technology/Web<br>services/library<br>Systems                |  |  |
| Tenured/tenure-track faculty   |  |  |  |  |
| Clinical/instructional faculty |  |  |  |  |
| Nonfaculty professional        |  |  |  |  |
| Contingent faculty             |  |  |  |  |
| Other (please specify)         |  |  |  |  |

9. Rank the most important issues in your library related to your tenure/tenure-track faculty-track organization with one being the most important:

- Workload
- Salary
- Procedural justice
- Advancement
- Other (please specify)
- Other (please specify)
- Other (please specify)

10. Rank the most important issues in your library related to your clinical-track faculty organization with one being the most important:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| • Workload           | • Other (please specify) <input type="text"/> |
| • Salary             | • Other (please specify) <input type="text"/> |
| • Procedural justice | • Other (please specify) <input type="text"/> |
| • Advancement        |   |

11. If your library has both tenure and clinical tracks, how are the roles, responsibilities and expectations between the two tracks differentiated? Please address work hours, work tasks, supervisory, etc.

12. If your organization offers the option for faculty to switch tracks, please describe the circumstances or requirements?

13. Please attach your policy documents from your library that describe the expectations and work of librarians on the tenure and nontenure tracks. [Drop files or click here to upload]

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