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FIU Libraries Salary Task Force Report on Staff Salaries to Library Assembly

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FIU Libraries Salary Task Force Report on Library Staff Salaries

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Florida International University (FIU) Libraries Salary Task Force is to address salary inequities among library staff at FIU Libraries. The task force has been assembled to undertake a thorough examination and comparison of salaries across the university, with a primary focus on the library staff. By conducting a comprehensive analysis, the task force intends to identify disparities in compensation and ensure that salaries are fair, equitable, and reflective of the skills, responsibilities, and contributions of the library staff members.

The Salary Task Force aims to promote a more transparent compensation structure that aligns with the University's compensation pay philosophy's guiding principles: mission driven, fair/objective, sustainable, competitive, and compliant. In addition to recommending a compensation program within the Libraries that adheres to the Salary Guidelines for Non-Faculty Employees at Florida International University, the task force intends to provide recommendations for salary adjustments to create a more equitable and competitive salary framework that supports the University's commitment to recognizing and valuing its workforce. Ultimately, the Salary Task Force endeavors to enhance overall job satisfaction, employee morale, and the university's ability to attract and retain talented library professionals.

1.2 Salary Task Force Members

Kelley Rowan, Digital Archives Librarian. Chair of the Salary Task Force
Annia Gonzalez, Special Collections Librarian.
Adriana Harris, Account Manager

Christopher M. Jimenez, Associate Librarian.
Patricia Pereira-Pujol, University Librarian.
Jamie Rogers, IT Assistant Director.
Jennifer Scholl, Library Specialist.

This report was submitted to the Florida International University Library Faculty Assembly on **April 11, 2024**.

1.3 Executive Summary

Salaries & Quality of Life Decisions

- The average pre-tax salary for all FIU Libraries Staff $45.3K
- 72% of respondents (FIU Libraries Staff Members) are cost-burdened by rent or mortgage
- 93% of respondents are experiencing one or more quality of life challenges based on inadequate salary.
- 77% of respondents rely on income from a partner and/or family and friends to meet their income needs while another 14% have a second job.
- The majority of respondents (93%) appreciated the benefits at FIU (health insurance, etc.) and 61% chose the work environment as the most valued aspects of employment.

Workload, Hiring, & Retention

- 79% of respondents either did not negotiate their salary during the hiring process or were unsuccessful in negotiations.
- 79% of respondents are assuming duties of one or more vacant positions.
- 62% or respondents are either unaware of promotion processes or have not pursued promotion or reclassification.
- 100% of respondents replied that they have either looked for employment elsewhere or declined to answer this question. Zero respondents chose to answer that they have not looked for higher compensation employment elsewhere.
- 97% of respondents agreed with the statement that, "Our institution is a great place to get started, but you must take a position elsewhere to be compensated appropriately."
- Respondents ranked higher salaries (86%), better benefits (65%) and a flex work schedule (50%) as the three most important retention tools.
- 37% of respondents are currently in the process of obtaining work elsewhere while 71% have updated their resumes in anticipation of searching for other positions.

Section 2: Cost and Quality of Living

2.1 Cost of Living Comparison

In order to understand the significance of a salary, one must place that salary within the context of the cost of living. A wage may appear poor or good in a vacuum, but when placed in the context of more or less expensive places to live the power of one's salary takes on a new meaning. Table 1 considers the cost of living (COL) for each wage earner in a household. It compares the COL across several State University System (SUS) locations using data from both the MIT and Nerdwallet COL Calculators. The table presents a recommended gross salary based on the cost of living index and median housing costs.

City University (County)	Required Annual Income Before Taxes	Cost of Living Index Delta (%)	Housing Median Home Price (3BR, 2BA)	Housing Median Rental Price (2BR)
Miami FIU (Miami-Dade)[1]	$50,464	100%	$676,663	$2,874
Tallahassee FAMU, FSU (Leon)	$43,662	79%	$446,856	$1,406
Sarasota NCF (Sarasota)	$46,114	88%	$515,976	$2,104
Orlando UCF (Orange)	$50,147	85%	$474,323	$1,860
Jacksonville UNF (Duval)	$44,427	78%	$380,823	$1,849
Tampa USF (Hillsborough)	$47,999	82%	$453,289	$1,708

Table 1. Florida SUS Cost of Living Calculator Comparison Table[2]

[1] The annual salaries for Educational, Instruction and Library Occupations for all counties in Florida is $55,820 according to the the Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes250000.htm; accessed 2-28-2024

[2] Data for the Required Annual Income Before Taxes was collected by MIT from 2019-2023. The rest of the data was collected by Nerdwallet in 2024.

The annual compensation breakdown at FIU Libraries for staff is as follows:

- Average pre-tax salary for FIU Libraries Specialty Staff is $35K
- Average pre-tax salary for FIU Libraries Technology Staff is $65.2K
- Average pre-tax salary for FIU Libraries Office Administrative Staff is $47.8K
- Average pre-tax salary for FIU Libraries Director Staff is $87.1K
- Average pre-tax salary for all FIU Libraries Staff $45.3K

2.2 Rent, Cost Burdening, & Quality of Life

2.2.A Florida & Cost Burdening

- Cost burdening is when a renter or homeowner is spending more than 30% of their income on housing and utilities.
- Of the 67 Florida counties, in 28 of them, the renter is cost burdened.

According to the COL calculators, average rent for a 2 bedroom residence is $2,834 per month, which amounts to $34,488 annually. Given the annual average salary of $50,464, a typical resident in Miami-Dade County spends around 68% of their income on housing needs alone. This far exceeds the Cost Burdening threshold. Even if one managed to cut their housing costs in half (not always an option given the housing market) the cost burden of housing would still amount to 34% of average income. Thus, the typical resident must either rely on others (spouse, family, etc.) or find additional income (second job, government assistance, etc.) to support their needs.

2.2.B FIU Libraries & Cost Burdening

The data shows that an overwhelming number of respondents are cost burdened by rent/mortgage. A majority of respondents report spending more than half of their salary on housing costs, which does not include utilities. The effect of cost burdening has significant implications for subsequent quality of life decisions.

- 26 people responded to the additional survey on rent/mortgage costs
- 72% of respondents are cost-burdened by rent or mortgage
- 54% of respondents spend more than 50% of their salary on housing
- 12% of respondents spend 70% or more of their salary on housing

2.2.C Impact on Quality of Life

Basic Needs & Healthcare

Individuals who spend 50% or more of their salary on housing are forced to make trade-offs to meet basic needs. This means they skip important costs such as medications, and doctor visits, and are forced to choose cheaper unhealthy foods. This leads to poorer health outcomes as well as increasing stress and emotional strain. The situation in the FIU Libraries is no different than this national trend. Our survey indicates that nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) have skipped necessary medical or dental interventions because of their financial situation.

Mental Health in Miami-Dade[3]

- 4.5 days per month of poor mental health days
- 3.5 days of poor physical health (Florida average is 3)
- Poor mental health was reported by 15% of people living in Miami-Dade
- Poor mental health days lasted 14 or more days per month

Almost a third of respondents (30%) in the FIU Libraries report actively engaging in coping strategies to deal with the stress of insufficient funds. They recognize the impact of financial stress in their lives and seek to mitigate those factors.

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[3] *Severe Housing Cost Burden*. County Health Ranking & Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.
https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model/health-factors/physical-environment/housing-and-transit/severe-housing-cost-burden?year=2023

Section 3: Salary Comparison Data

3.1 Methodology

Salary Comparison

The Fall 2021 salary data was pulled from the "Florida Has a Right to Know" website[4], which publishes state payroll and pension data from the Department of Management Services in the State of Florida. That page includes a section devoted to the State University System. The data was accessed in Spring 2022.

We compared salary ranges and percentages within Federal tax brackets rather than individual salaries to preserve anonymity and to make general comparisons. The authors acknowledge that there are concerns about the wide ranges of salaries within each tax bracket. However, the benefits of using the tax bracket standard outweighed the problems.

The charts presented use the Tax Bracket for those filing as Single[5]:
- 10% Tax Rate: Annual Gross Salary of $0 to $11,000
- 12% Tax Rate: Annual Gross Salary of $11,001 to $44,725
- 22% Tax Rate: Annual Gross Salary of $44,726 to $95,375
- 24% Tax Rate: Annual Gross Salary of $95,376 to $182,100

Section 4.2 presents an overview of compensation within the FIU Libraries (N=56). All staff within the unit are presented regardless of title. The only criterion for inclusion was that the employee was not classified as faculty by the university. Table 2 is not segregated by roles or responsibilities.

Due to FIU Libraries' diverse set of operations as an Academic Unit, subsequent comparisons were subdivided into four main categories based on role & responsibility. The data was not analyzed based on state classifications (Staff, Administrative & Professional, Faculty, etc.).
- Section 4.3 - Library Comparables: This includes staff whose titles include library specialties like "library specialist" or "library manager." The salaries of library personnel with those roles were compared with staff who held similar titles on campus.
  - FIU Libraries N=36 (62% of all staff with library specialty titles)
  - University Comparables N=22
- Section 4.4 - Technology Comparables: This includes staff whose titles include technology specialties like "IT generalist," "Application Developer" or "Systems Administrator." The salaries of library personnel with those roles were compared with staff who held similar titles on campus.
  - FIU Libraries N=7 (4.6% of all staff with technology specialty titles)
  - University Comparables N=142

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[4] Florida Has a Right to Know. https://www.floridahasarighttoknow.myflorida.com/
[5] Internal Revenue Service, Rev. Proc. 2022-38. https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rp-22-38.pdf

- Section 4.5 - Administrative Office Comparables: This includes staff whose titles include administrative specialties like "Account Manager" or "Executive Assistant." The salaries of library personnel with those roles were compared with staff who held similar titles on campus.
    - FIU Libraries N=9 (6.3% of all staff with administrative specialty titles)
    - University Comparables N=133
- Section 4.6 - Director Comparables: This includes staff whose titles include director specialties like "Assistant/Associate Director." The salaries of library personnel with those roles were compared with staff who held similar titles on campus.
    - FIU Libraries N=4 (1.4% of all staff with director titles)
    - University Comparables N=272

The number of employees at FIU with director titles (N=272) is about the same as the number of staff members at the university in IT roles and Administrative Office roles combined (N=275). This role distribution is an indication of university practices in classifying personnel. In the FIU Libraries, this distribution is reversed.

3.2 Overview of FIU Libraries Staff Salary

Figure 1. FIU Libraries Overview: Mean Salary
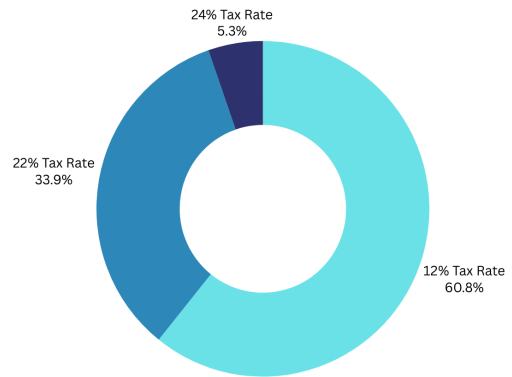
Figure 2. FIU Libraries Overview: Salary Disparity
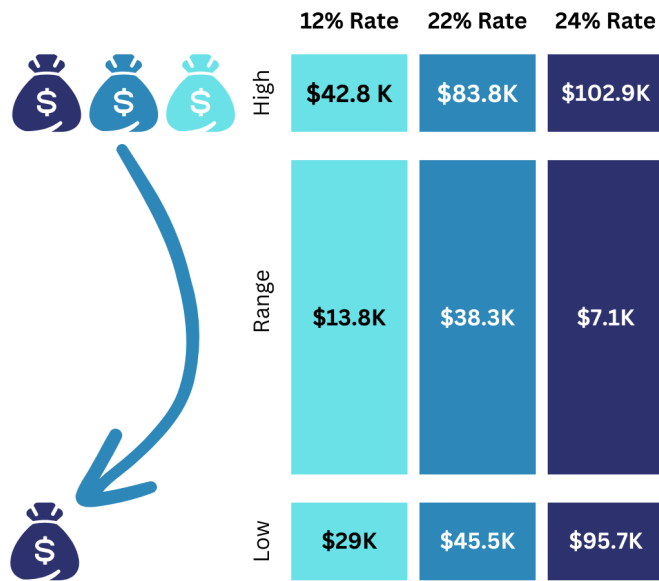
Figure 3. FIU Libraries Overview: Salary Disparity

	12% Tax Rate	22% Tax Rate	24% Tax Rate
Count	34	19	3
Mean	$32,894.06	$59,298.77	$98,585.94
Low	$29,000.00	$45,500.00	$95,775.02
High	$42,850.00	$83,817.00	$102,948.96

Table 2. FIU Libraries Overview: Salary Breakdown

3.3 Salary Comparisons Between FIU Libraries Staff with "Library" Titles and Others with "Library" Titles within the University

Figure 4. FIU Libraries Mean Salary (Blue) Compared to Other University Library Titles Mean Salary (Gold)
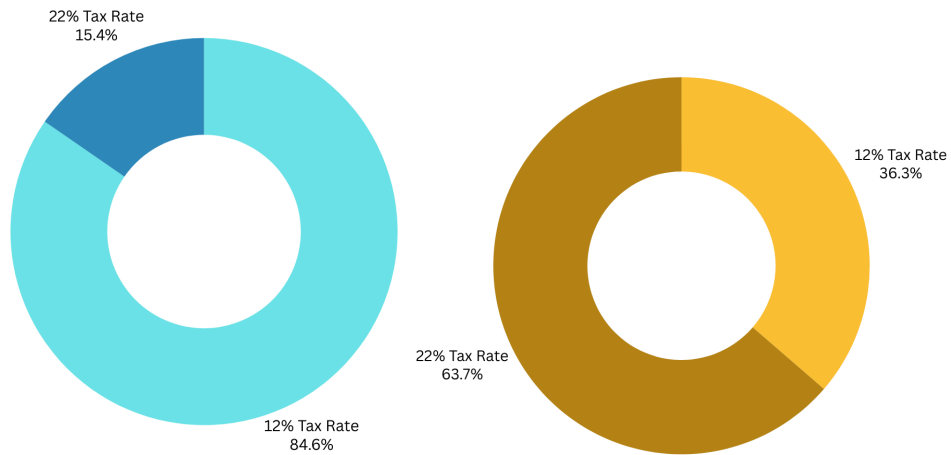
Figure 5. FIU Libraries Tax Rate Distribution (Blue) Compared to Other University Library Titles Tax Rate Distribution (Gold)
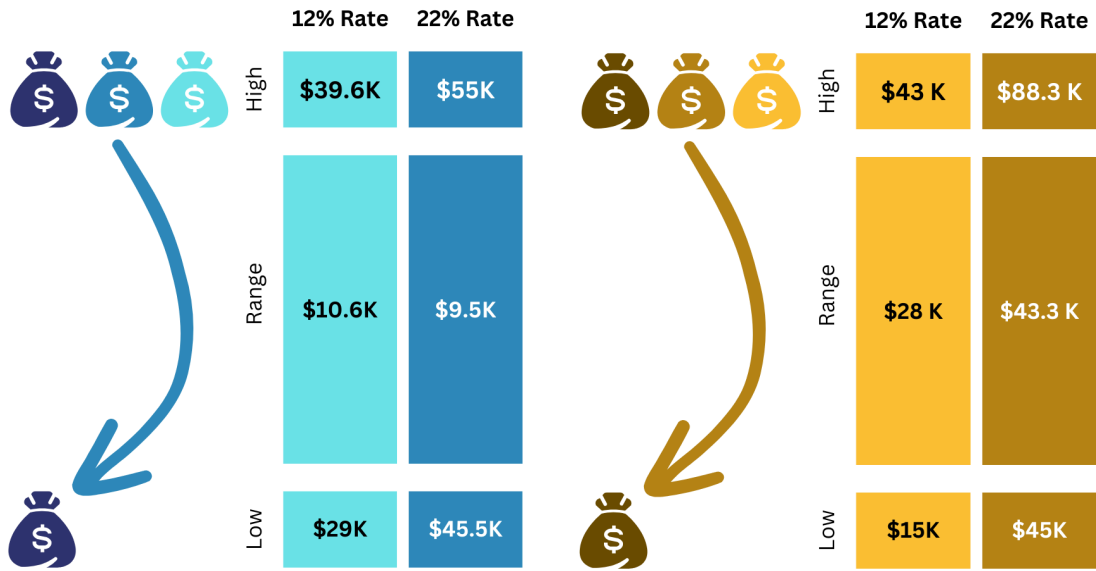
Figure 6. FIU Libraries Salary Disparity (Blue) Compared to Other University Library Titles Salary Disparity (Gold)

	12% Tax Rate	**22% Tax Rate**
Count: FIU Libraries	33	6
Count: University	8	14
Mean: FIU Libraries	$32,592.36	$48,856.79
Mean: University	$31,218.26	$63,182.07
Low: FIU Libraries	$29,000.00	$45,500.00
Low: University	$15,000.00	$35,000.00
High: FIU Libraries	$39,691.57	$55,000.00
High: University	$43,000.00	$88,339.45

Table 3: Salary Comparison Between Library Staff with Library Specialty Titles and
Others with Library Specialty Titles within the University Staff Classification

3.3.A Findings

The average staff salary in the FIU Libraries is around $35K per year. This is $16K less than the MIT Cost of Living Calculator (MIT COL) estimates within Miami-Dade County. Over 60% of

library staff (N=34) earn less than $43K per year. Of the lowest wage earners, multiple staff members are paid $29K annually.

Comparable positions within the university earn around $51K per year, which is on par with the Miami-Dade County MIT COL. The university average staff salary also amounts to about $8K more annual compensation than library staff comparables. Over 60% of comparable positions within the university fall in the 22% Tax Bracket, which is an inverse distribution of the FIU Libraries' staff tax brackets.

3.5 Salary Comparisons Between Library IT Titles and Others with IT Titles within the University

Figure 7. FIU Libraries IT Personnel Mean Salary (Blue) Compared to Other University IT Personnel Mean Salary (Gold)
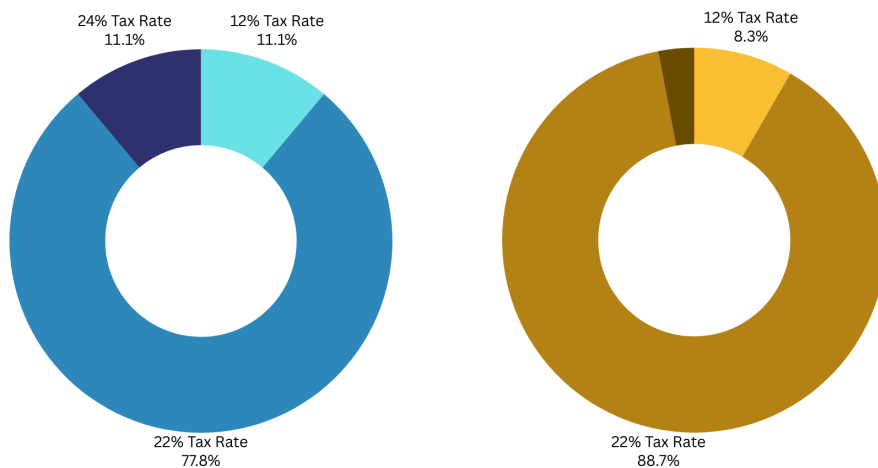
Figure 8. FIU Libraries IT Personnel Tax Rate Distribution (Blue)
Compared to Other University IT Personnel Tax Rate Distribution (Gold)
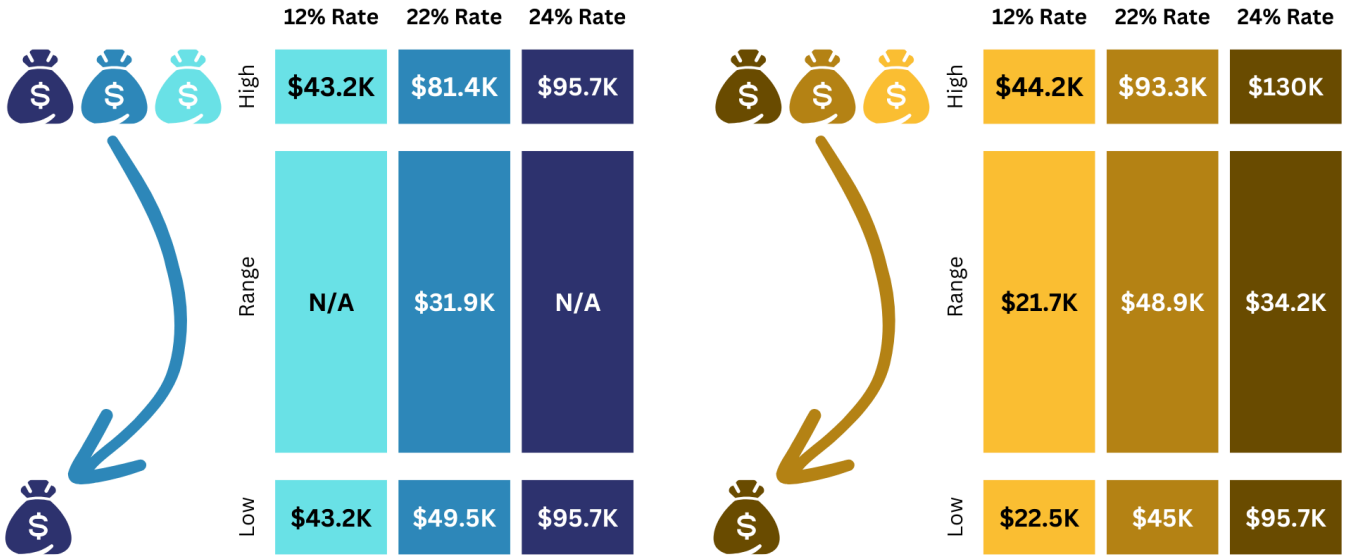
Figure 9. FIU Libraries IT Personnel Salary Disparity (Blue) Compared to Other University IT Personnel Salary Disparity (Gold)

	12% Tax Rate	22% Tax Rate	24% Tax Rate
Count: FIU Libraries	1	7	1
Count: University	11	118	4
Mean: FIU Libraries	$43,260.00	$64,006.18	$95,775.02
Mean: University	$36,482.49	$63,732.89	$111,443.76
Low: FIU Libraries	$43,260.00	$49,500.00	$95,775.02
Low: University	$22,500.00	$45,000.00	$95,775.02
High: FIU Libraries	$43,260.00	$81,479.45	$95,775.02
High: University	$44,250.00	$93,967.36	$130,000.00

Table 4: Salary Comparison Between Library IT Personnel and Others within University IT Personnel Classifications

3.3.A Findings

The average IT staff salary in the FIU Libraries is around $65K per year. 33% of library IT staff (N=3) earn less than the MIT COL recommendation for Miami-Dade County.

Comparable IT positions within the university earn around $64K per year. 88.7% of comparable IT positions within the university fall in the 22% Tax Bracket, which is proportionally equivalent to the 77.7% of FIU Libraries' technology staff bracket distribution.

There is a smaller annual pay disparity between highest earners and lowest earners in FIU Libraries technology ($52.5K) than across University technologists ($85K).

3.5 Salary Comparisons Between Library Staff with Office Administration Titles and Others with Office Administration Titles within the University

Figure 10. FIU Libraries Administrative Personnel Mean Salary (Blue)
Compared to Other University Administrative Personnel Mean Salary (Gold)

Figure 11. FIU Libraries Administrative Personnel Personnel Tax Rate Distribution (Blue)
Compared to Other University IT Administrative Tax Rate Distribution (Gold)

Figure 12. FIU Libraries Administrative Personnel Salary Disparity (Blue)
Compared to Other University Administrative Personnel Salary Disparity (Gold)

Tax Rate	12% Tax Rate	22% Tax Rate	24% Tax Rate
Count: FIU Libraries	3	4	0
Count: University	64	75	3
High: FIU Libraries	$42,850.00	$66,486.67	N/A
High: University	$44,000.00	$90,000.00	$149,500.00
Low: FIU Libraries	$32,750.00	$47,750.00	N/A
Low: University	$13,894.59	$45,000.00	$95,932.57
Mean: FIU Libraries	$37,870.58	$55,358.55	N/A
Mean: University	$35,633.56	$61,398.78	$114,477.52

Table 5: Salary Comparison Between Library Administrative Personnel and
Others within University Administrative Personnel Classifications

The average administrative office staff salary in FIU Libraries is around $48K per year, which is $3K less than the MIT COL recommendation for Miami-Dade County. 57% of library staff (N=4) earn less than $50K per year.

Comparable administrative office positions within the university earn around $51K per year. The university average administrative office staff salary amounts to about $3K more annual compensation than library staff comparables. The distribution of administrative comparable tax rates are proportionally equivalent. However, the FIU Libraries administrative office staff salaries are lacking in the higher, 24% Tax Rate category.

There is a smaller annual pay disparity between highest earners and lowest earners in the FIU Libraries administrative office staff ($33.7K) than across University administration ($135.6K).

3.6 Salary Comparisons Between Library Staff with Director Titles and Others with Director Titles within the University

Figure 13. FIU Libraries Director Personnel Mean Salary (Blue)
Compared to Other University Director Personnel Mean Salary (Gold)
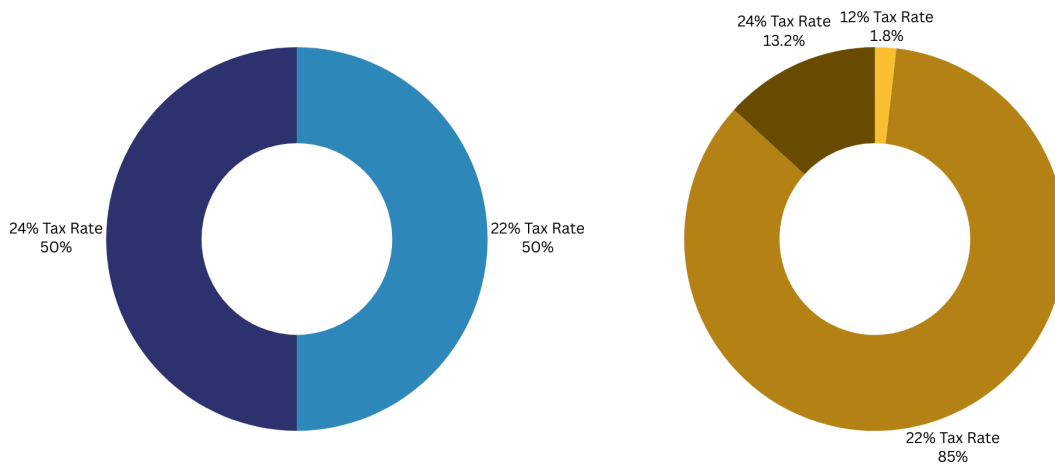
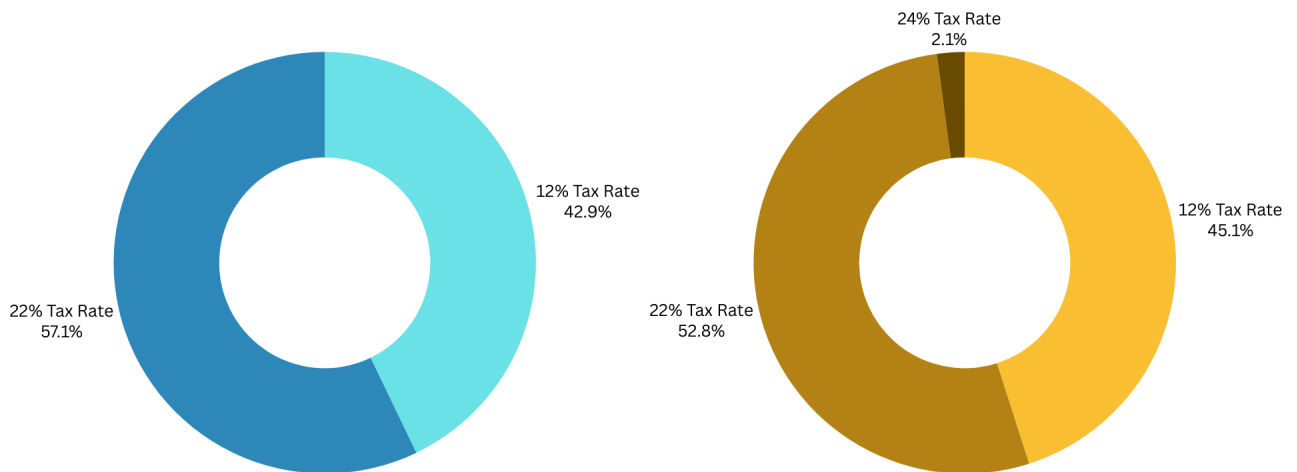*Figure 14. FIU Libraries Director Personnel Tax Rate Distribution (Blue)*
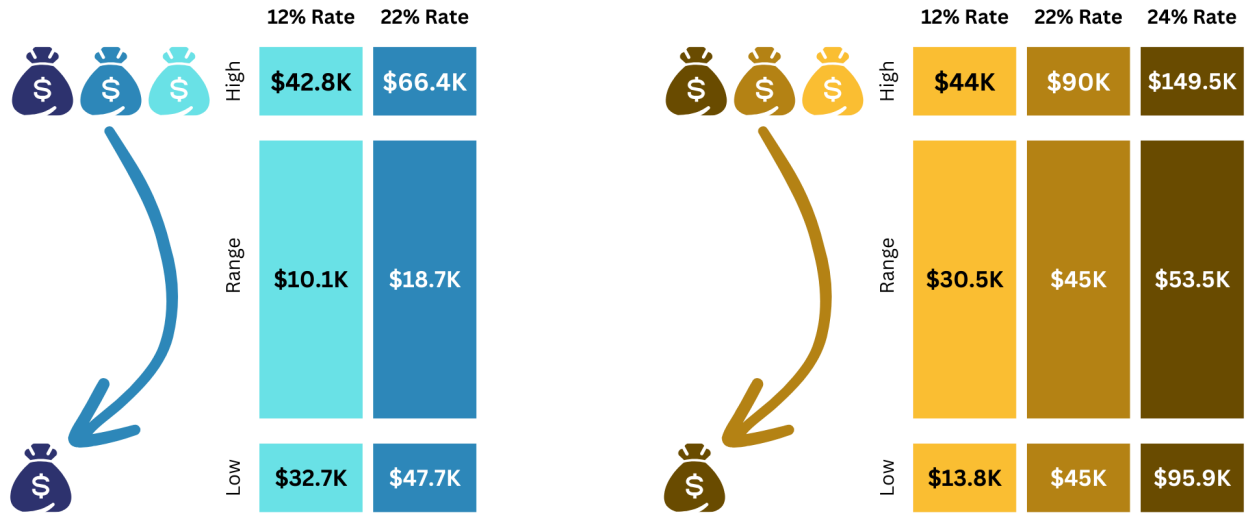*Compared to Other University IT Administrative Tax Rate Distribution (Gold)*
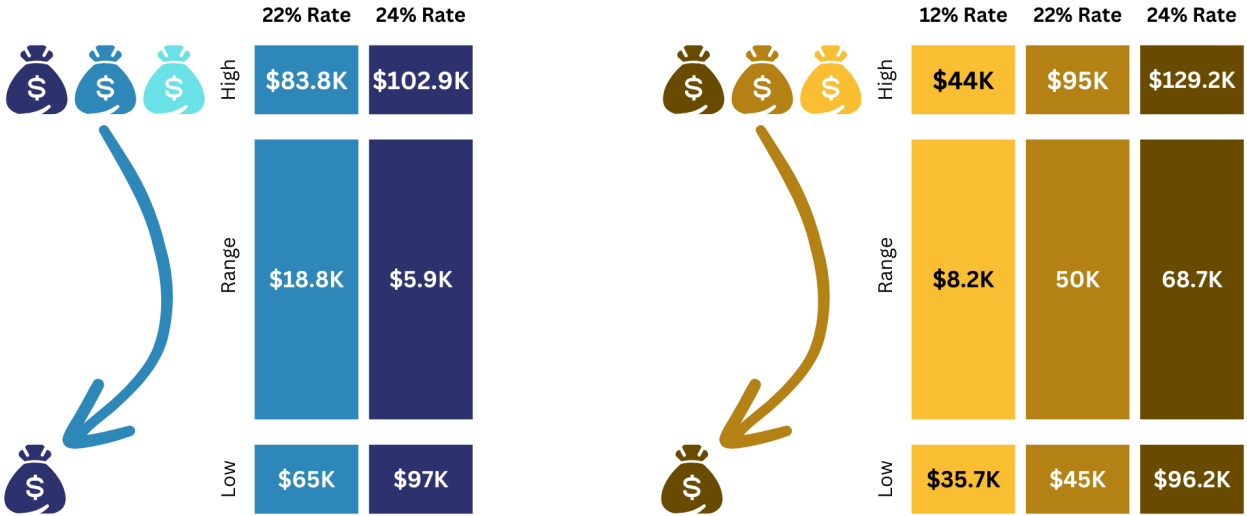
Figure 10. FIU Libraries Director Personnel Salary Disparity (Blue)
Compared to Other University Director Personnel Salary Disparity (Gold)

Tax Rate	12% Tax Rate	22% Tax Rate	24% Tax Rate
Count: FIU Libraries	0	2	2
Count: University	5	231	36
High: FIU Libraries	N/A	$83,817.00	$102,948.96
High: University	$44,000.00	$95,049.86	$165,000.00
Low: FIU Libraries	N/A	$65,000.00	$97,033.83
Low: University	$35,705.00	$45,000.00	$96,291.64
Mean: FIU Libraries	N/A	$74,408.50	$99,991.40
Mean: University	$39,941.00	$75,445.83	$112,110.80

3.6.A Findings

The average director staff salary in the FIU Libraries is around $87K per year. No library director earns less than the MIT COL recommendation for Miami-Dade County.

Comparable director positions within the university earn around $80K per year. The average FIU Libraries director salary is about $7K more annual compensation than university peers. 13.2% of university director salaries (N=36) fall in the 24% Tax Bracket, while FIU Libraries compensates 50% of their directors (N=2) in this range. Hence, compensation at the director level is, on average, greater at the FIU Libraries than the university as a whole.

There is a smaller annual pay disparity between highest earners and lowest earners for FIU Libraries directors ($37.9K) than across University directors ($129.2K).

Section 4: Survey Results

4.1 Methodology

4.1.A Survey 1

The Salary Task Force was convened in February 2022, where members discussed staff concerns, reviewed the existing library faculty salary report, and began crafting a set of survey questions to send to library staff. The survey was assembled using Qualtrics and sent out to library staff in October 2022. The goal of the survey was to understand the impact of low salaries on quality of life for FIU library staff and to understand what role salary plays in hiring and retaining staff.

In October of 2022 there were 37 permanent staff employees and 25 administrative and professional staff in the library. In December 2022, some staff in the lower pay bands received a market adjustment raise. However, the raises were not significant enough to alter the results of this survey.

4.1.B Survey 2

After reviewing the Survey 1 results, the Task Force determined that additional information was needed to assess the impact of rent/mortgage costs on library staff. A second survey was crafted in Qualtrics and sent out to library staff in August 2023.

4.2 Salary, Cost of Living, and Real-World Impact

Questions in this section are related to income needs, the impact of salary on quality of life, and the benefits of working at FIU. The following statistics are based on the percentage of respondents to the survey and not the percentage of staff at FIU Libraries.

4.2.A Significant Findings

- 93% of respondents are experiencing one or more quality of life challenges based on inadequate salary.
- 77% of respondents rely on income from a partner and/or family and friends to meet their income needs while another 14% have a second job.
- 35% of respondents are choosing to have fewer or no children due to insufficient income.
- The majority of respondents (93%) appreciated the benefits at FIU (health insurance, etc.) and 61% chose the work environment as the most valued aspects of employment.
- 7% of respondents forgo luxuries and/or necessities such as internet service or a car to make ends meet.

4.2.B Survey Responses

Can staff meet their income needs on their salary alone?

There were 43 respondents out of a possible 62 for this question representing 69% of all staff at FIU Libraries. This question allowed respondents to choose multiple answers. The following statistics are based on the total number of respondents.
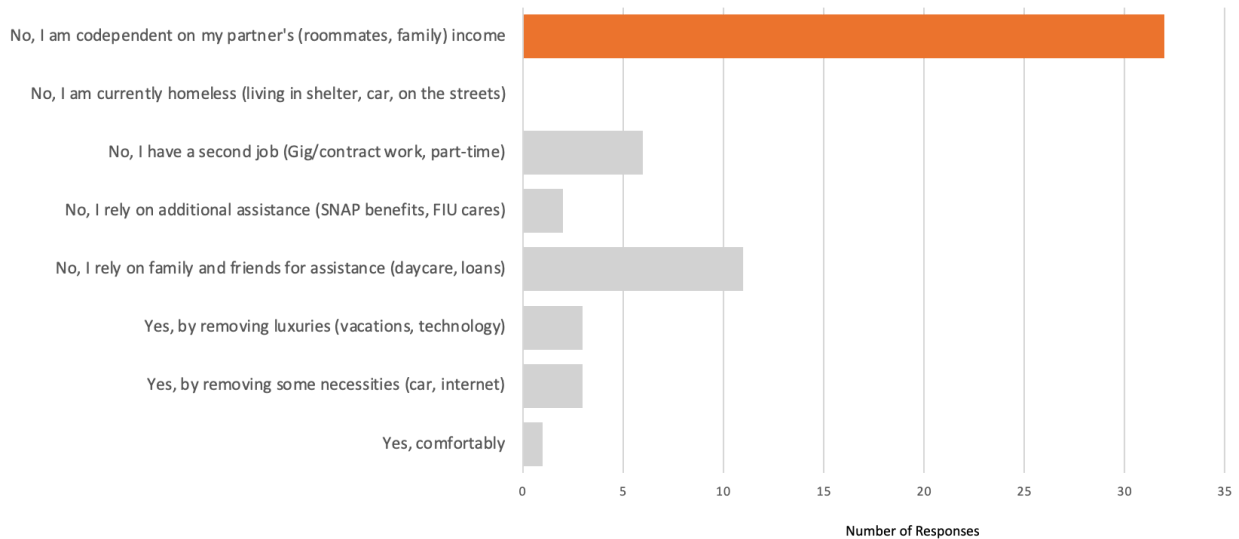
Figure 1 - graph of responses to the survey question "Can you cover all of your living expenses in South Florida on your salary alone? Check all that apply."

- 77% are codependent on roommates and family to meet their living expenses.
- 26% rely on family and friends for assistance, including for daycare and loans.
- 14% have a second job.
- 7% are able to make ends meet by removing luxuries such as vacations and technology while another 7% have had to forgo necessities such as internet service or car ownership.
- 5% rely on additional assistance (SNAP benefits, FIU cares).
- 2% are able to live comfortably on their current salary.
- Currently, no respondents are homeless or living in a shelter, car, or on the streets.

What does Quality of Life look like for FIU staff?

The following question allowed for multiple statements to be chosen. Percentages are based on the number of total respondents.
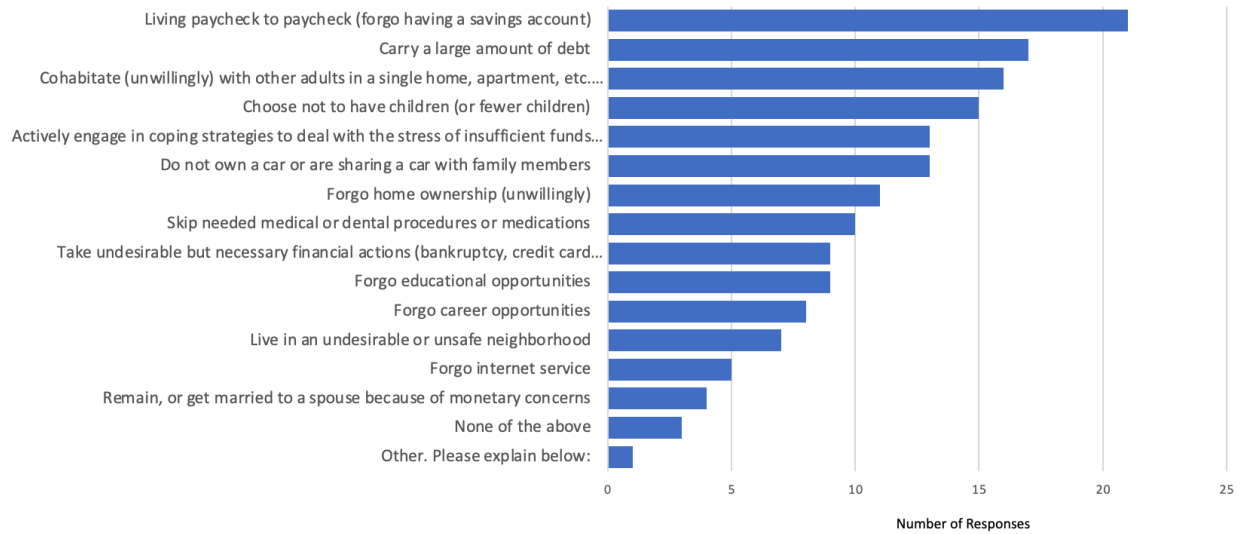
Figure 2 - graph of responses to the survey question "Has your salary motivated you to make any of the following quality of life decisions? Check all that apply."

- 49% of respondents are currently living paycheck to paycheck and do not have a savings account.
- 40% of staff carry a large amount of debt
- 37% are unwillingly cohabitating with other adults in order to meet their income needs.
- 35% have chosen to have either no children or fewer due to financial strain.
- 30% do not own a car or are sharing a car with another family member.
- 30% are actively engaged in coping strategies to deal with the stress of insufficient funds (meditation, counseling, etc.)
- 26% have had to forgo home ownership (unwillingly)
- 23% of respondents are skipping needed medical or dental procedures or medications.
- 21% have not pursued educational opportunities due to financial strain.
- 21% have had to take undesirable but necessary financial actions such as filing for bankruptcy or credit card consolidation and using services for payday loans and cash advances.
- 19% have had to forgo career opportunities.
- 16% report living in an undesirable or unsafe neighborhood.
- 12% cannot afford internet service.
- 9% have remained or gotten married to a spouse to alleviate monetary concerns.
- 7% are not experiencing any of the above quality of life challenges.
- 1 respondent provided a comment:
  - "Forgo cable tv, forgot more expensive internet although it would help when working from home, live a simpler life, hold on to an older car that gives regular problems but avoids car payment for newer car"

What do library staff value most about working at FIU?

This question allowed for multiple statements to be chosen. Percentages are based on the number of total respondents. Overall, the overwhelming majority (93%) valued benefits such as health insurance and the retirement plan. 61% appreciated the work environment while another 57% valued the tuition for family and friends. Respondents valued the flexible daily work schedule and the flex work opportunities equally with 45% including these benefits in their choices. Two people (5%) valued a good salary and two respondents left a comment. The remaining options chosen by respondents are listed below:
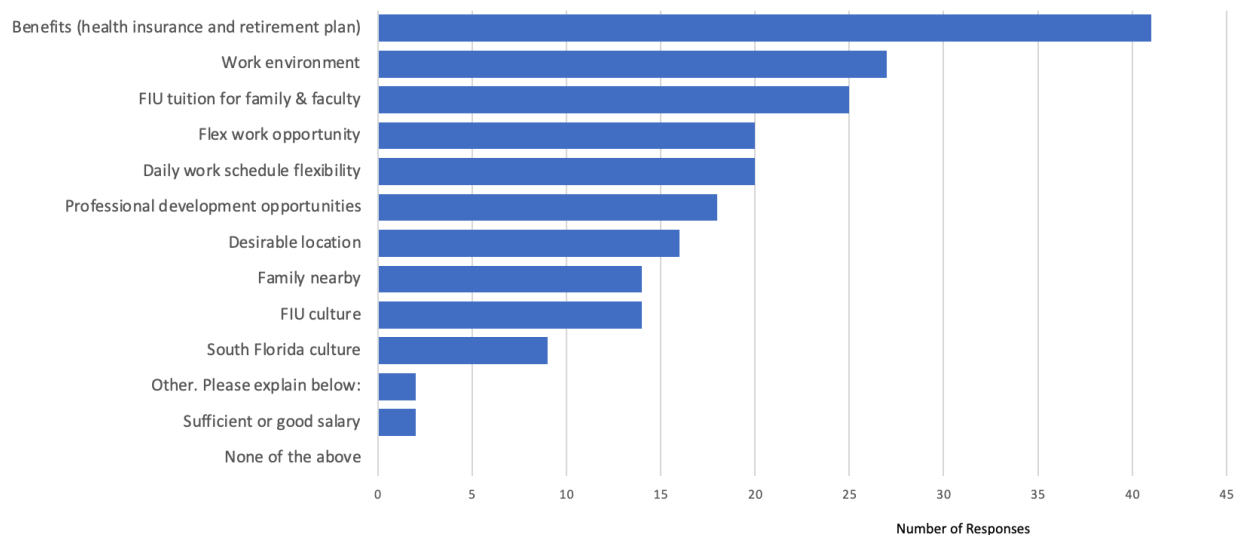
Figure 3 - graph of responses to the survey question "What do you appreciate about working at FIU? Check all that apply."

- 41% professional development opportunities
- 36% desirable location
- 32% family nearby
- 32% FIU culture
- 20% South Florida culture

Comments:

1. "The salary is not sufficient, the salary is not good. This is bad."
2. "How my work schedule contributes or adapts to my work life balance"

4.2.C Conclusion: Salary, Cost of Living, and Real-World Impact

This section revealed that a great deal of survey participants are unable to meet their income needs on their salary alone. A staggering number of survey takers indicated a codependency or

need for assistance from family, friends, and/or roommates to make ends meet. Moreover, those who did not specify that they received help from other adults had to take alternate measures like sacrificing luxuries and necessities, gaining additional employment, or turning to loan and hardship assistance services.

Another revelation from this section is that half of the respondents live paycheck to paycheck. A significant number also indicated that they carry large debts and actively engage in coping strategies to deal with the stress from financial strain. Some of the aforementioned luxuries and necessities that individuals in this survey sacrifice are car and home ownership, internet, and educational opportunities. Most alarming is that a quarter of respondents disclosed that they have passed up needed medical and dental surgeries and medications. A third of respondents admit to limiting/forgoing having children.

However, employees overwhelmingly agree on the importance and value of the benefits provided by FIU, like health insurance and the retirement plan. More than half of the survey participants appreciated the work environment and the tuition opportunities, while about half of the respondents valued their flex work options and professional development opportunities.

4.3 Staff Workload, Salary, and Promotion

Questions in this section are focused on salary negotiation, promotion, and staff workload. The goal was to identify whether staff were carrying workloads equivalent to their faculty counterparts and whether they had knowledge of promotion processes that are available to them.

4.3.A Significant Findings

- 79% of respondents either did not negotiate their salary during the hiring process or were unsuccessful in negotiations.
- 79% of respondents are assuming duties of one or more vacant positions.
- 62% or respondents are either unaware of promotion processes or have not pursued promotion or reclassification.

4.3.B Survey Responses

Do staff attempt to negotiate their salaries and if so, how effective has that been?

There were 44 respondents out of a possible 62 to this question. This represents 71% of all staff at FIU Libraries. The following statistics are based on the number of respondents to this question.

- 59% were unsuccessful in an attempt to negotiate their hiring salary.
- 20% of staff did not attempt to negotiate their salary at the time of hiring.
- 16% were able to negotiate to a small degree.

- 5% negotiated a significant change in their hiring salary.

■ No   ■ I did not try to negotiate   ■ To a small degree   ■ To a significant degree
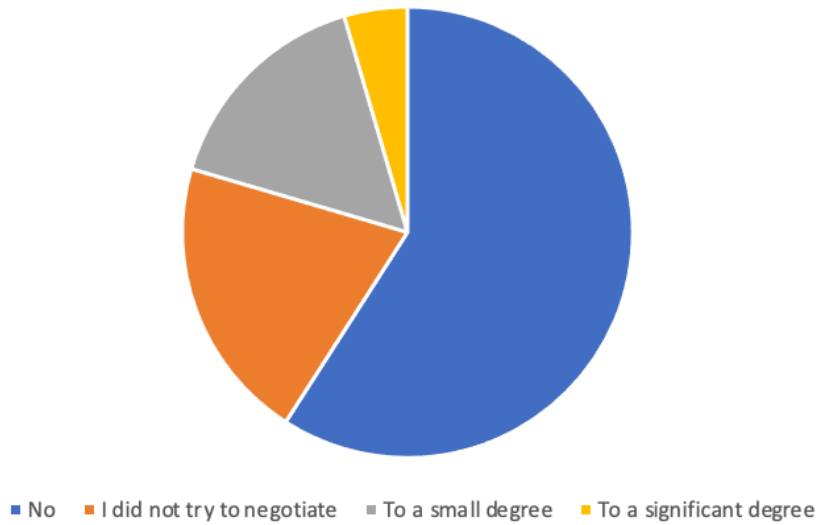
Figure 4 - graph of responses to the survey question "When you were first hired, were you able to negotiate your salary?"

Are vacant positions or short staffing affecting staff workloads?

There were 42 respondents out of a possible 62 to this question, representing 68% of all staff at FIU Libraries. The following statistics are based on the number of respondents to this question.

■ I have not been affected by vacant or needed positions in my department.

■ I have had to assume the responsibilities of 2+ vacancies or needed positions

■ I have had to assume some of the responsibilities of a vacant or needed position.

■ I have had to assume most or all of the responsibilities of a vacant or needed position.

Figure 5 - graph of responses to the survey question "Has a vacant position or short staffing in your department affected your work load?"

- 43% of respondents have had to assume some of the responsibilities of a vacant or needed position.
- 26% of respondents have had to assume most or all of the responsibilities of a vacant or needed position.
- 21% of respondents have not been affected by vacant or needed positions in their department.
- 10% of respondents have had to assume the responsibilities of 2+ vacancies or needed positions.

Are the job duties staff are performing equivalent to a library faculty position?

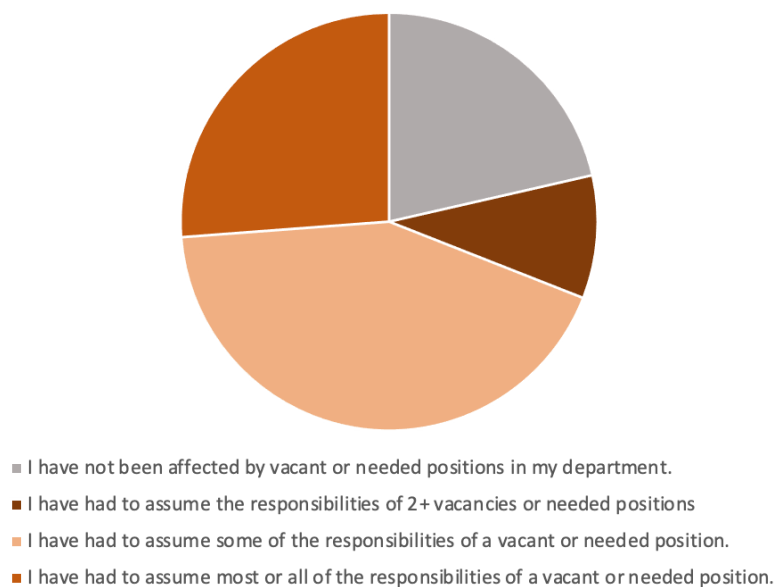There were 40 responses to this question out of a possible 62, representing 65% of the total staff at FIU Libraries. The following statistics are based on the number of respondents to this question.

■ Yes ■ Prefer not to answer ■ No

Figure 6 - graph of responses to the survey question "Are some or most of your job duties equivalent to the job description or duties of a library faculty position here or within peer academic libraries?"

- 35% of respondents preferred not to answer.
- 32.5% of respondents answered yes.
- 32.5% of respondents answered no.

Have library staff requested a promotion or reclassification within the library?

There were 50 responses to this question out of a possible 62, representing 81% of all staff at FIU Libraries. The following statistics are based on the number of respondents to this question.
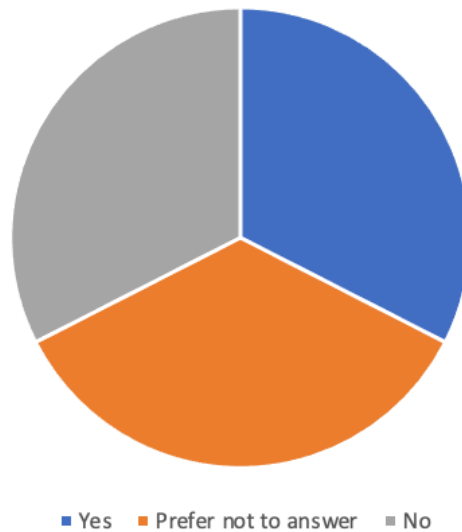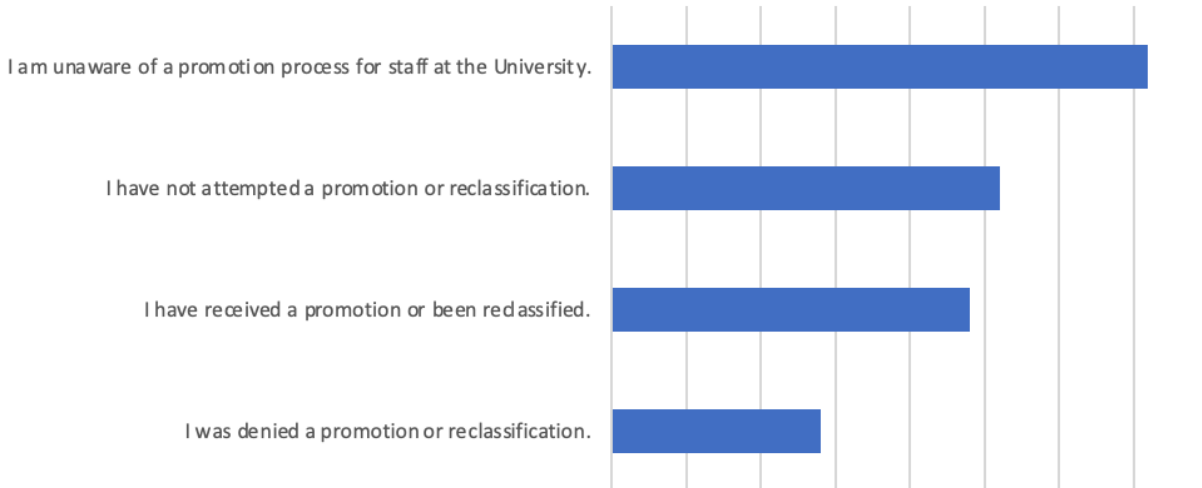
Figure 7 - graph of responses to the survey question "Have you requested a promotion or reclassification within the library? Check all that apply."

- 36% of respondents are unaware of any promotional process for staff at FIU.
- 26% of respondents have not attempted a promotion or reclassification.
- 24% of respondents have received a promotion or been reclassified.
- 14% of respondents were denied a promotion or reclassification.

4.3.C Conclusion: Staff Workload, Salary, and Promotion

This section addresses staff workload, salary, and promotion. One key takeaway is that a vast majority of staff members attempted to negotiate their salaries at the time of hiring. Only about a quarter of negotiation attempts were successful, with most only receiving a nominal increase.

In terms of promotion and reclassification within the position, more than a third of respondents were unaware of any promotion/reclassification process at FIU. Despite this, several respondents have received promotions or been reclassified. Proportionately, some respondents marked that they had not attempted to get a promotion, while others indicated that they were denied.

In terms of workload, most indicated they had taken on some to all aspects of a vacant job or much-needed position. Some survey takers revealed that they are performing the function of two or more positions in addition to their own.

4.4 Hiring and Retention

This section explores the concerns library staff encounter regarding retention and whether they have felt the need to look elsewhere for gainful employment. It also explores benefits and concerns that staff feel play a critical role in retaining current employees.

4.4.A Significant Findings

- 100% of respondents replied that they have either looked for employment elsewhere or declined to answer this question. Zero respondents chose to answer that they have not looked for higher compensation employment elsewhere.
- 97% of respondents agreed with the statement that, "Our institution is a great place to get started, but you must take a position elsewhere to be compensated appropriately."
- 88% of respondents agreed with the statement that, "We are unable to attract highly qualified candidates due to our low compensation." This is confirmed by the 80% disagreement rate for the inverse of this question, "Our reputation for fair compensation attracts plenty of qualified candidates for new positions."
- Respondents ranked higher salaries (86%), better benefits (65%) and a flex work schedule (50%) as the three most important retention tools.
- 17% of respondents are struggling with the high cost of childcare.
- 37% of respondents are currently in the process of obtaining work elsewhere while 71% have updated their resumes in anticipation of searching for other positions.

4.4.B Survey Responses

Staff ranking of benefits and concerns related to retention

In this question, respondents were asked to rank eight retention concerns in order of the most important to the least important. The ranking elements were better benefits, lack of paid family leave, higher salary, better professional development funding, flex work schedule, improved interpersonal work environment, ability to be more engaged in library decision making, and more sick and vacation leave.
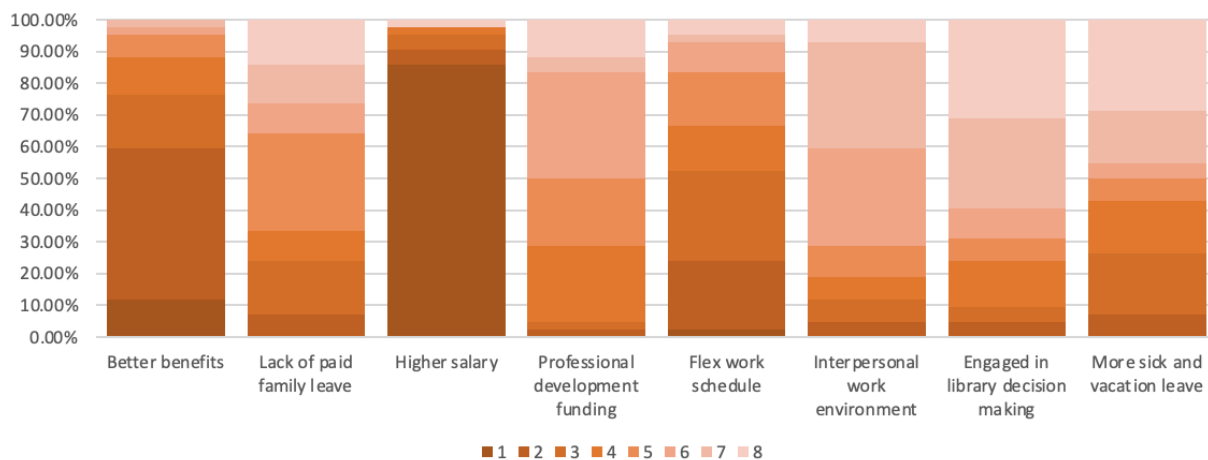

Figure 8 - graph of responses to the survey question "Please rank the following concerns by priority from most important to least important."

- Higher salaries (86%) was chosen by the majority of respondents as the top concern with another 10% placing it in the second and third tiers.

- Better benefits (12%) and flex work scheduling (2%) were the only other elements that appeared in the first rank.
- In the second and third tiers, better benefits were chosen by 65% and flex work scheduling by 50%.
- 41% of staff respondents ranked lack of paid family leave in the neutral tiers of fourth and fifth. This may be due to the fact that 42% of staff respondents viewed childcare concerns as not applicable to them.
- The lower priorities in the sixth and seventh tiers were better professional development funding (38%), improved interpersonal work environment (64%), and the ability to be more engaged in decision making (39%).
- Staff respondents ranked more sick and vacation time (29%), a benefit which is comparatively generous in comparison with non-academic positions, and the ability to be more engaged in decision making (31%) in the final and least important tier.

What childcare issues are affecting library staff?

The following question allowed for multiple statements to be chosen. Percentages are based on the number of total respondents.

- The majority (42%) of respondents report not being affected by these concerns
- 17% of respondents are affected by the high cost of childcare
- 12% of respondents consider the lack of affordable on-campus childcare options an issue
- 9% of respondents report that there are not enough sick or vacation days to care for sick children and another 9% find the lack of schedule flexibility in relation to childcare a concern.
- 8% of respondents reported that the lack of paid maternity or paternity leave (beyond using sick and vacation leave) is an issue for them.
- 2% of respondents consider the lack of on-campus childcare for infants to be problematic.

Comments:

"[...] it would be helpful to have additional paid sick, or vacation days to care for family members emergencies." – redacted to protect the anonymity of the respondent

Has salary and/or the cost of living in South Florida motivated staff to look at other employment opportunities?

There were 43 respondents out of a possible 62 for this question. This represents 69% of all staff at FIU Libraries. The following statistics are based on the percentage of respondents to the survey question and not the percentage of staff at FIU Libraries.
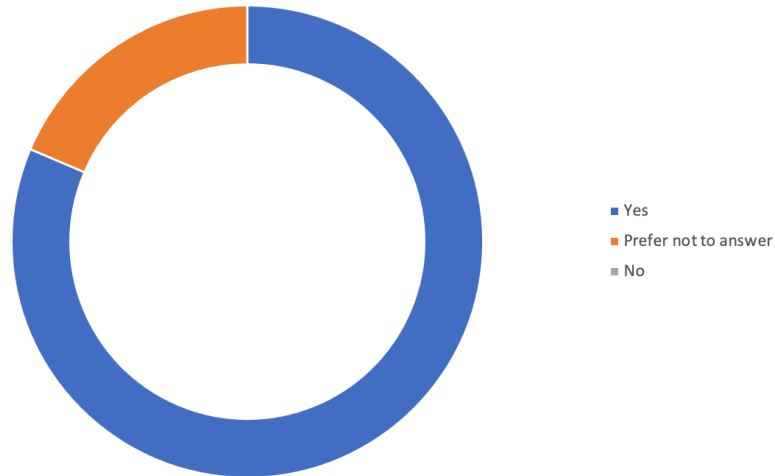
Figure 9 - graph of responses to the survey question "Has your salary and/or the cost of living in South Florida motivated you to look at other employment opportunities?"

- 81% of respondents answered yes.
- 19% of respondents preferred not to answer.
- 0% of respondents answered no.

What steps have staff taken to find employment elsewhere?

The following question allowed for multiple statements to be chosen. Percentages are based on the number of total respondents.

Figure 10 - graph of responses to the survey question "What steps have you taken to find employment elsewhere? Please check all the steps that apply."

- 97% of respondents have searched for open positions.
- 71% of respondents have updated a resume/CV with the intent to apply.
- 54% of respondents have submitted an application.
- 26% of respondents checked have interviewed for a position elsewhere.
- 9% of respondents have turned down a position.
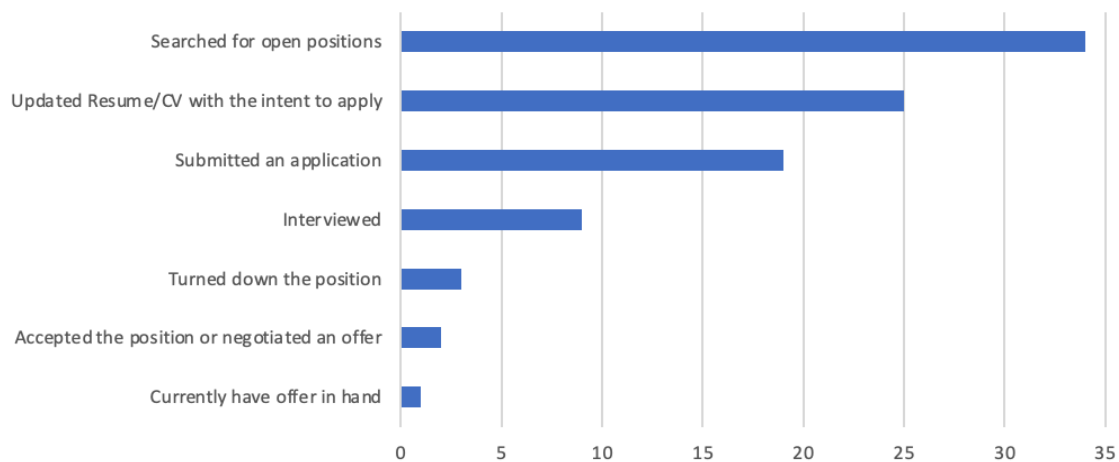- 8% of respondents have accepted a new position or negotiated an offer.
- 3% of respondents have an offer in hand.

Ranking Hiring Concerns

Respondents were asked to rank six statements in order from one to six with those requiring immediate attention ranked highest and those of lesser importance ranked lower. The six statements were:

1. Ability to meet diversity requirements
2. Ability to attract qualified candidates
3. Perpetuation of unequal pay based on gender
4. FIU Libraries' reputation
5. Perceived negative interpretation of multiple open positions and frequent turnover
6. Low salaries compared to cost of living
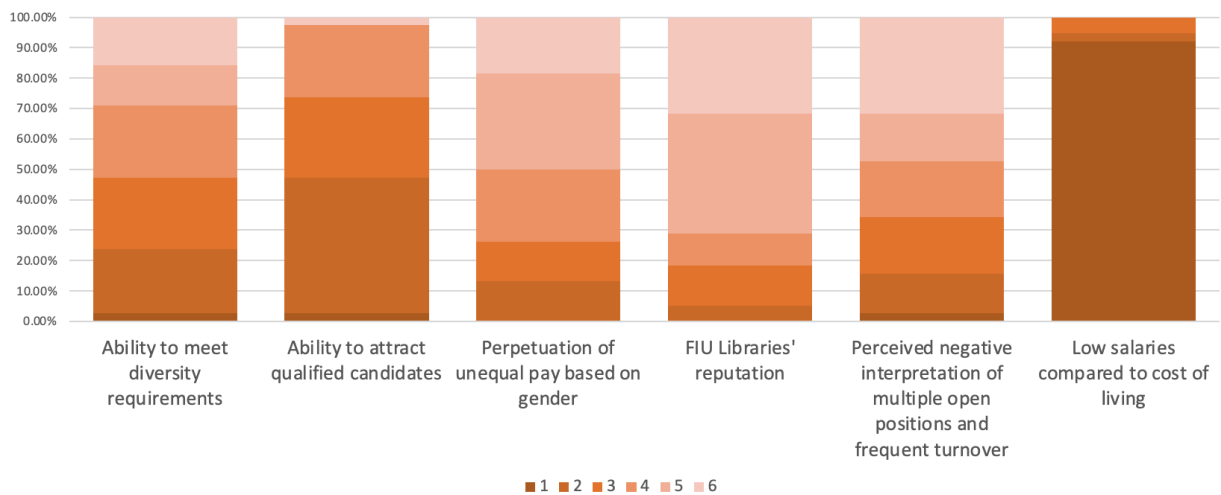

Figure 11 - graph of responses to the survey question "Rank the following staff hiring concerns in order of which items need the most attention now (1) to those requiring less immediate attention (6)."

Percentages are based on the total number of respondents.

- 92% of respondents chose low salaries compared to cost of living as the hiring concern needing the most attention.

- 45% of respondents ranked the ability to attract qualified candidates as the second and third (26%) most important hiring concern.
- Respondents ranked the ability to meet diversity requirements, the ability to attract qualified candidates, and perpetuation of unequal pay based on gender equally (24%) as the fourth hiring concern needing attention.
- 39% of respondents chose FIU Libraries' reputation as the fifth hiring concern needing attention.
- The hiring concerns of least importance to respondents were FIU Libraries' reputation and perceived negative interpretation of multiple open positions and frequent turnover at 32% each.

4.4.C Conclusion: Hiring & Retention

This section addresses staff concerns impacting retention and recruitment. The survey results highlight that the most significant concern among survey participants regarding retention is their low salaries, with an overwhelming majority of respondents expressing this as their top priority. Better benefits and flex work schedules were also recognized as important, but other factors like professional development funding, interpersonal work environment, and engagement in decision making were generally considered less critical.

While family and childcare-related concerns may not directly affect the majority of respondents, a noteworthy portion of respondents grapple with issues like childcare costs, the lack of affordable on-campus options, limited sick and vacation days, and the need for more flexible work arrangements and family leave policies.

The survey results also suggest that a substantial majority of respondents at FIU Libraries have been motivated to consider alternative employment opportunities due to concerns about salary and the cost of living in South Florida. The secondary survey responses indicate that a significant proportion of survey participants at the institution allocate well beyond the recommended 30%[6] of their household income to cover rent or mortgage expenses. This suggests that housing costs represent a substantial financial burden for many respondents, which can impact their overall financial well-being and quality of life.

A significant portion of respondents have also taken various proactive steps to explore employment opportunities elsewhere, including job searches, resume updates, applications, interviews, and even accepting new positions or negotiating offers. These findings highlight the importance of addressing compensation and affordability issues to retain and support library staff.

A large majority of survey respondents expressed concerns about the impact of low compensation on attracting qualified candidates and the perception of high turnover as an indicator of workforce unhappiness. Participants also recognize the importance of addressing

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[6] Edson, C. L. (2011). Affordable Housing—An Intimate History. Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law, 20(2), 193–213. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41429169

diversity requirements and gender pay equity. The reputation of FIU Libraries, while significant, ranks lower in priority. Lastly, there was strong agreement that the institution is seen as a good starting point, but employees may need to seek employment elsewhere for appropriate compensation and recognition of their hard work.

4.5 Statement Rankings

In the final section, the survey asked staff to rank to what degree they agreed or disagreed with a statement. On a scale of 0 to 10, a ranking of 10 represents full agreement with the statement and 0 represents complete disagreement.

1. Statement: We are unable to meet diversity requirements because we do not offer high enough starting pay.
    - 64% (30 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
    - The majority of the respondents (63%) agreed with this statement, ranking it between 6 to 10. 30% of respondents gave it the highest ranking of 10.
    - 7% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
    - 30% of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4.

2. Statement: The starting salary is not a major factor in meeting diversity requirements.
    - 68% (32 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question.The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
    - 22% of respondents agreed with the statement, ranking it between 6 to 10.
    - 9% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
    - The majority of the respondents (69%) disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4.

3. Statement: We are unable to attract highly qualified candidates due to our low compensation.
    - 87% (36 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
    - A vast majority (88%) of respondents agreed with the statement, ranking it between 6 to 10. 59% of respondents gave it the highest ranking of 10.
    - 2% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
    - 10% of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4.

4. Statement: Our reputation for fair compensation attracts plenty of qualified candidates for new positions.
    - 64% (30 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
    - 13% of respondents agreed with the statement, ranking it between 6 to 10.
    - 7% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.

- ○ A large majority (80%) of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4. 27% of respondents gave this statement the lowest ranking of 0.

5. Statement: High turnover does not deter candidates from applying to our institution.
   - ○ 49% (23 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
   - ○ 43% of respondents agreed with the statement, ranking it between 6 to 10.
   - ○ 9% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
   - ○ 48% of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4.

6. Statement: High turnover indicates that our workforce is unhappy.
   - ○ 77% (36 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
   - ○ The majority (80%) of respondents agreed with this statement, ranking it between 6 to 10. 36% of respondents gave it the highest ranking of 10.
   - ○ 3% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
   - ○ 17% of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4.

7. Statement: Our institution is a great place to get started, but you must take a position elsewhere to be compensated appropriately.
   - ○ 77% (36 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
   - ○ The vast majority (97%) of respondents agreed with this statement, ranking it between 6 to 10. 64% of respondents gave it the highest ranking of 10.
   - ○ None of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
   - ○ 3% of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4.

8. Statement: Your hard work will be recognized with increased pay at this institution.
   - ○ 77% (36 out of 47) of survey respondents answered this question. The below rankings reflect the percentage of respondents who answered the question.
   - ○ 17% of respondents agreed with this statement, ranking it between 6 to 10.
   - ○ 8% of the respondents gave this statement a neutral ranking of 5.
   - ○ A large majority (75%) of respondents disagreed with the statement, ranking it between 0 to 4. 42% of respondents gave this statement the lowest ranking (0).

Section 6: Conclusions & Recommendations

This report underscores how low salaries profoundly affect the daily lives of our library staff. Before finalizing the report, the Libraries Salary Task Force convened a meeting to disseminate survey findings and research outcomes. During the session, participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the results and offer recommendations to address the challenges identified.

During our discussions, staff made it clear that they need more than just higher salaries to improve their work lives. They asked for a mentoring program, a clear path for promotions following the established career ladders and university salary guidelines for non-faculty employees following the established career ladders and university salary guidelines for non-faculty employees[7], and better representation within library governance and committees. They also highlighted the importance of keeping the university staff union (AFSCME) intact[8]. Staff were also concerned with ensuring job descriptions are realistic and not overwhelming and would like to see more administrative support for managing workloads when positions aren't filled.

To address some of these concerns, it was suggested that faculty advocates can support the staff by speaking up to the administration and making sure these needs are met. They can also mentor staff members and provide guidance for their professional growth. By doing this, we can create an environment where staff feel valued and supported, which ultimately benefits the entire library and university community.

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[7] Salary Guidelines for Non-faculty Employees at Florida International University, Effective: September 2022. https://hr.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SALARY-GUIDELINES-REVISED-FINAL-1.pdf

[8] The committee is aware that AFSCME has been decertified (https://www.miamiherald.com/news/business/article285692821.html). This staff concern was captured during our survey distribution while the union was still operational.