

Rankism Survey

The UNT Libraries' Climate Survey results highlighted both areas of concern and areas in which we have improved within our library environment and culture. After reviewing the results of the most recent survey, the Library Council on Diversity and Inclusion (LCDI) decided that it was necessary to seek further input from all library employees.

In particular, we wish to determine if rankism (defined below) is contributing to any of the experiences mentioned within the survey that led to feelings of belittlement or degradation. The following survey should clarify any issues surrounding rankism. We will also ask for your ideas for solutions so we can take action, as well as provide education & awareness for your colleagues. Your input is incredibly important!

What happens with the results?

The survey should take about 5 to 10 minutes of your time and will be open until the end of day, Wednesday, November 15, 2023. LCDI will review and aggregate the results (excluding demographic information or any identifying information in the open comments) to share with the library in January 2024 via Friday Frags. LCDI will share recommendations to Library Dean's Council for discussion, including ideas for next steps, action items, and determining who is responsible for addressing things. Outcomes and expectations that connect back to the Strategic Directions and UNT Values will also be considered.

What is rankism?

Rankism is an assertion of superiority based on a particular hierarchy that typically takes the form of putting others down either explicitly or in more subtle ways. This is an issue that is common in higher education. (For more information on rankism, you can read this article:

<https://libproxy.library.unt.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/anonymous-article/docview/207680731/se-2?accountid=7113>)

For more examples of rankism, see below:

- Someone in a higher position of authority treating someone like they are not an expert in their area (stacks management, document delivery, student supervision, instruction, etc.)
- Negative comments from faculty librarians about "paraprofessionals" (non- faculty) either directly to staff or where it can be overheard.
- Any comment from a person of a higher rank that dismisses another person.
- Complaints from faculty librarians about their salary or the work that goes into the PAC promotion process in front of a staff member who will never have the opportunity for that salary or a promotion without applying for another position.
- Department head prioritizing professional development for faculty librarians over staff to the degree that staff are an afterthought.
- Hearing, "oh that meeting is only for librarians" when that meeting could be a great professional development opportunity for a future librarian.
- A person in higher authority saying, "that task/project is subordinate work."
- Someone asking, "Do you know who I am?"

- Receiving poor treatment because of the perception that you don't have X degree. Receiving better treatment once people realize you have X degree.
- Having someone question a person's position because they don't have X degree. (For example, someone complaining about chair of a group/committee/etc. and questioning their decisions because "I don't think they even have a masters/doctorate" but then, once they realize that person has a masters, they respect their decisions.

Continue to survey:

- Yes
- No

Demographic Information

In this section, we ask for some demographic information, such as your role in the library, how long you have worked here, what division you are in, etc. While none of these responses are required, this information will help us determine if there is any correlation between your experiences and the experiences of those with similar backgrounds.

In what capacity do you work at the UNT Libraries:

- Student assistant
- Graduate student assistant
- Full time/Part time staff (non-librarian)
- Assistant Librarian who was staff within the last year
- Faculty Librarian (that doesn't fall in the above category of Assistant Librarian who was staff within the last year)

I am an administrator (this includes Department Head, Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Library Administrative Staff):

- Yes
- No

I have worked here for:

- Less than 5 years
- More than 5 years

I work in the following Division/Office:

- Collection Management
- Digital Libraries
- Offices (Administration/Facilities & Systems/UNT Press/External Relations)
- Public Services
- Special Libraries

If staff, do you have or are you working on my Master's in Library and Information Science.

- I am staff and I have an MLIS/MLS

- I am staff and I am working on an MLIS/MLS
- I am staff and I do not have an MLIS/MLS, nor am I working on one
- Not applicable, librarian

Rankism

In this section, we ask about your personal experiences and observations as they relate to rankism. While none of these responses are required, this information will help us determine if there is any correlation between your experiences and the experiences of those with similar backgrounds. It will also clarify the issues surrounding any rankism that may be occurring within the library. If you wish to expand on any of your answers here, there will be an opportunity to do that at the end of the survey.

In the past 12 months, I have personally witnessed rankism.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

In the past 12 months, I have personally experienced rankism when interacting with someone with more positional power than I have.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

My experience with rankism occurred with (please select all that apply):

- My supervisor
- Librarians
- Faculty
- Library Administrators (Department Head, Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Library Administrative Staff)
- Other (higher university employees, administrators, unknown rank, etc.)

I feel like I can express concerns about my experiences with rankism to my direct supervisor/skip level supervisor (my supervisor's supervisor)/someone in the library.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

I am confident that the person that I expressed my concerns about rankism to will either address it, intervene on my behalf, or coach me through addressing it.

- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not at all confident
- Unsure

Workplace Belonging

In this section, we ask some questions about how you feel about your work, and how you feel about work in general. Again, none of these responses are required, this information will help us determine if there is any correlation between your experiences and the experiences of those with similar backgrounds. It will also give us a fuller picture of how rankism may be affecting you personally as well as your work performance. If you wish to expand on any of your answers here, there will be an opportunity to do that at the end of the survey.

I am treated with dignity and respect by those with more positional power than I have.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure

My expertise is respected in my area of work by those within my department.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure

My expertise is respected in my area of work by those outside my department.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure

People in my department are supported in their professional development regardless of rank.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure

My experiences with rankism have negatively impacted my productivity at work.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure

My experiences with rankism have negatively impacted my emotional well-being and mental health.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

- Unsure

My department as a whole is committed to the fair treatment of all employees regardless of rank.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure
- Not applicable

My division as a whole is committed to the fair treatment of all employees regardless of rank.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure
- Not applicable

The library as a whole is committed to the fair treatment of all employees regardless of rank.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Unsure
- Not applicable

Solutions

In this section, we want to know what you think would improve your experience at work as it relates to rankism, as most of the literature providing guidance in this area is written by people with positional power. While these responses are not required, this information will give us actionable information to make improvements.

If I could recommend one thing to my colleagues with more positional power than I have, as it relates to rankism, it would be:

[text box]

How would you prefer to report any experiences of rankism? (select all that apply)

- To the Dean
- To my Associate/Assistant Dean
- To my direct supervisor
- To the Library Director of Administrative Services
- To the Library Council on Diversity and Inclusion/an independent council
- Other [text box]

Is there anything you would like the Library Council on Diversity and Inclusion to know about your experiences with rankism that we did not ask, or would you like to provide further clarifications to your multiple-choice responses above? Please share below:

[text box]

If there is enough interest, would you be interested in participating in a focus group on this topic? To maintain some anonymity in this survey, simply go to this rankism focus group survey to share your email and someone from the Library Council on Diversity and Inclusion will email you to schedule the focus group.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure