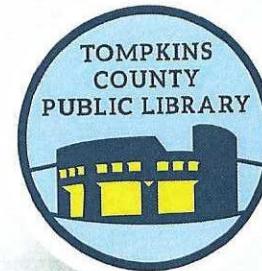


# 360 Degree Performance Appraisal



Matthew Burr

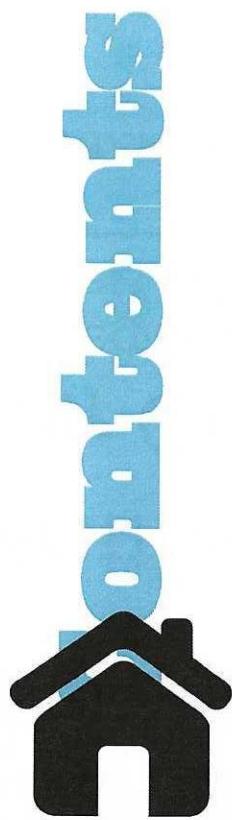
Burr Consulting, LLC

"Strategically Aligning HR as a Partner for the  
Success of Your Business"

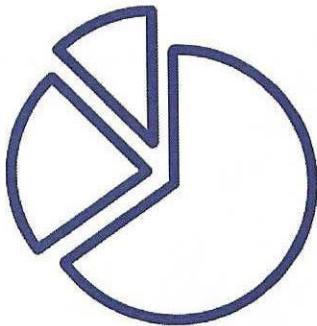
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<https://burrconsultingllc.com/>



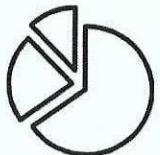


- Surveyor Information
- Part 1: Inspires a Shared Vision
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 2: Delivers Results
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 3: Focuses on the Customer
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 4: Challenges the Process
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 5: Values People
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 6: Develops Self & Others
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 7: Communicates with Candor
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 8: Acts in the Library's Best Interest
  - Scale Statistics
  - Comments
  - Themes
- Part 9: Emailed Feedback



# Surveyor Information

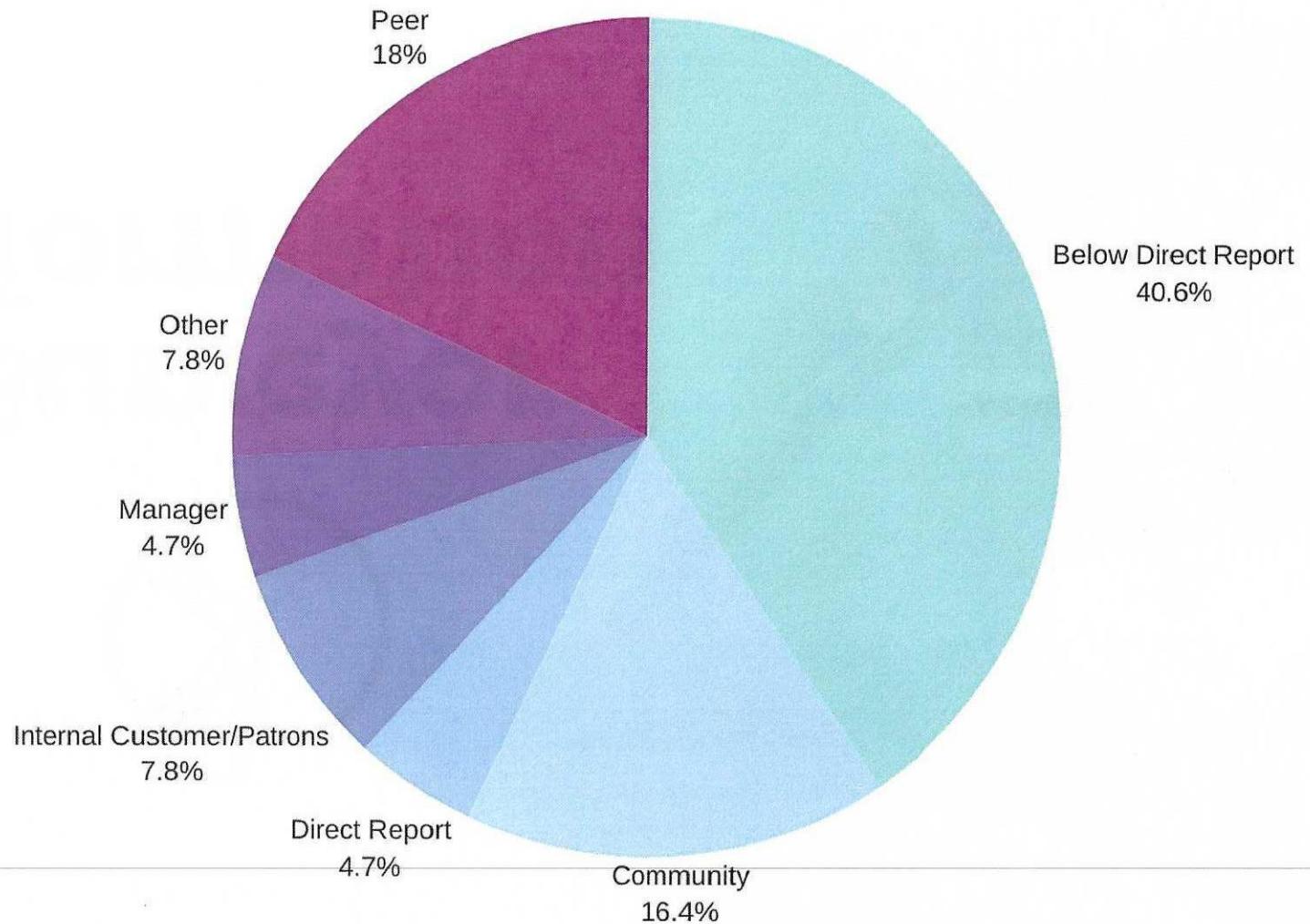




## PRE-SURVEY

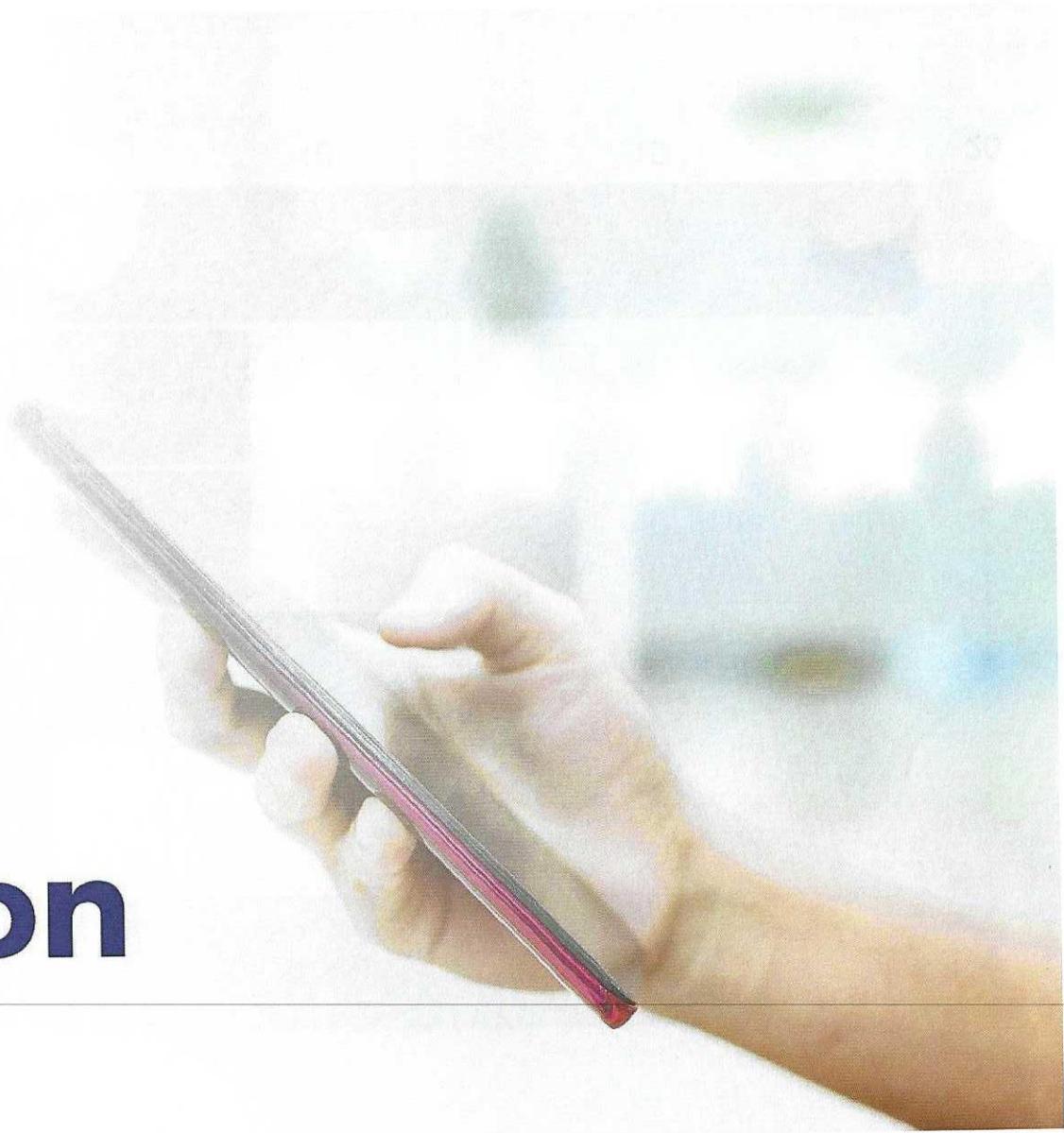
### Surveyor Information

#2  
Relationship to feedback  
recipient





# **Part 1: Inspires a Shared Vision**



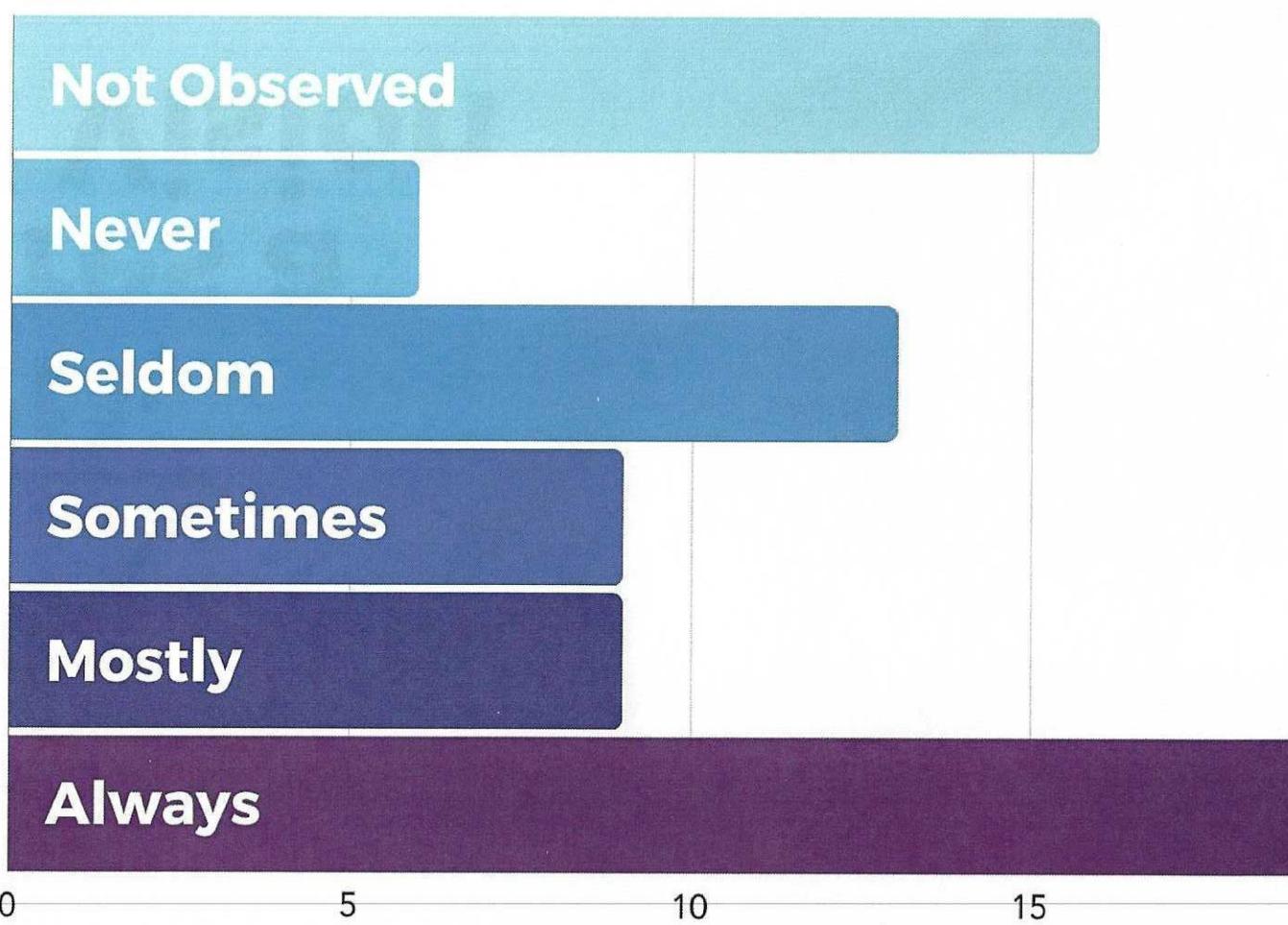


## PART 1

*Inspires a Shared  
Vision*

1.1

Provides Direction Around  
Vision



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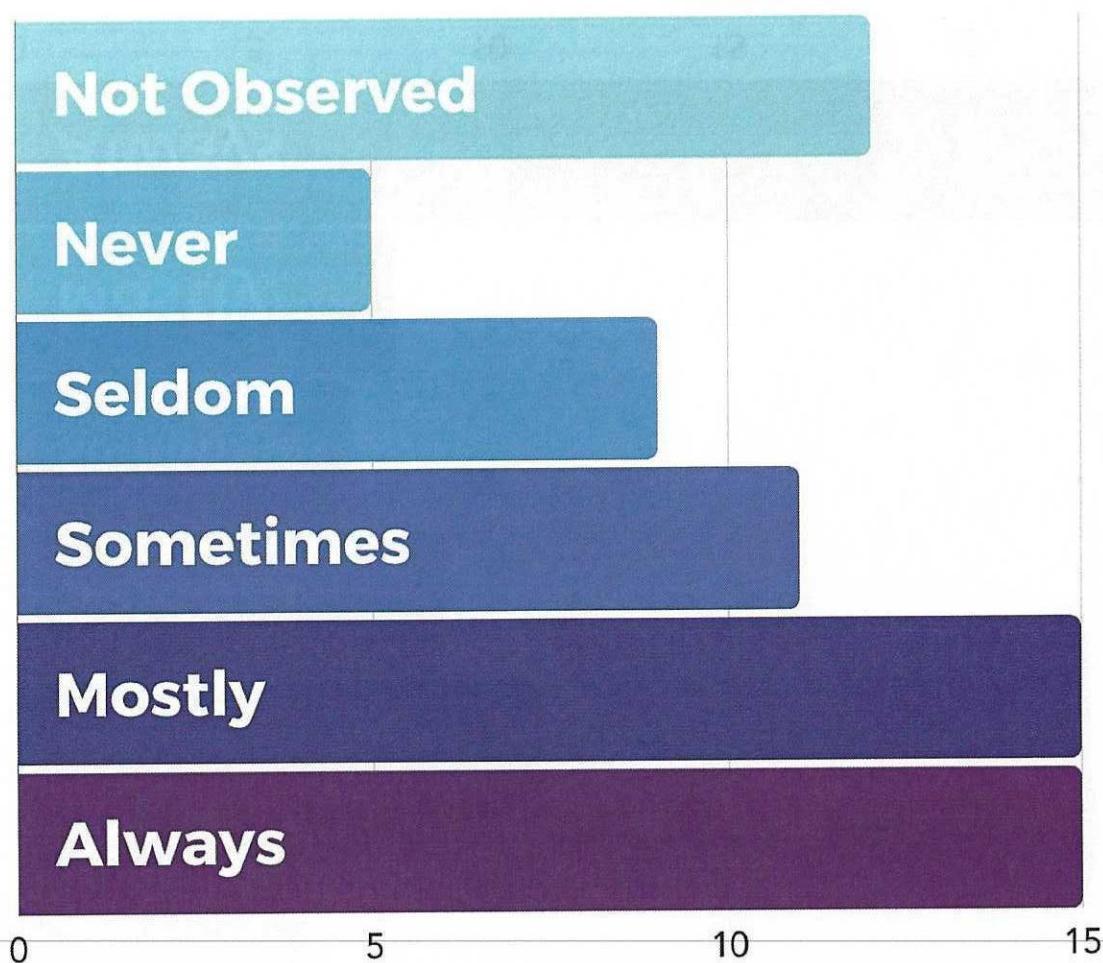




## PART 1

*Inspires a Shared  
Vision*

1.2  
Translates the Library  
Vision Into Actionable  
Plans



0

5

10

15

20



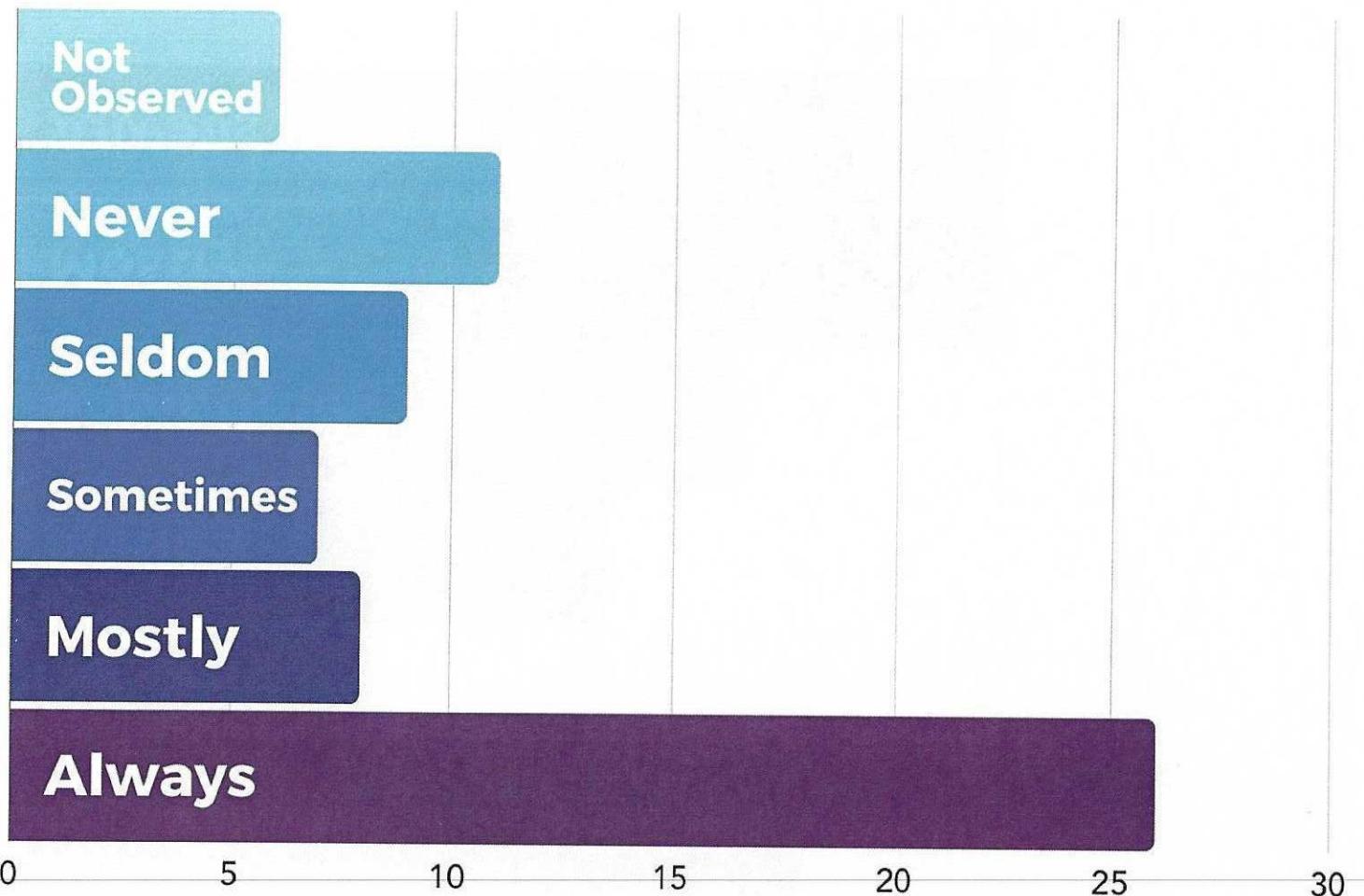


## PART 1

*Inspires a Shared  
Vision*

1.3

Creates Enthusiasm About  
the Future of Your Library



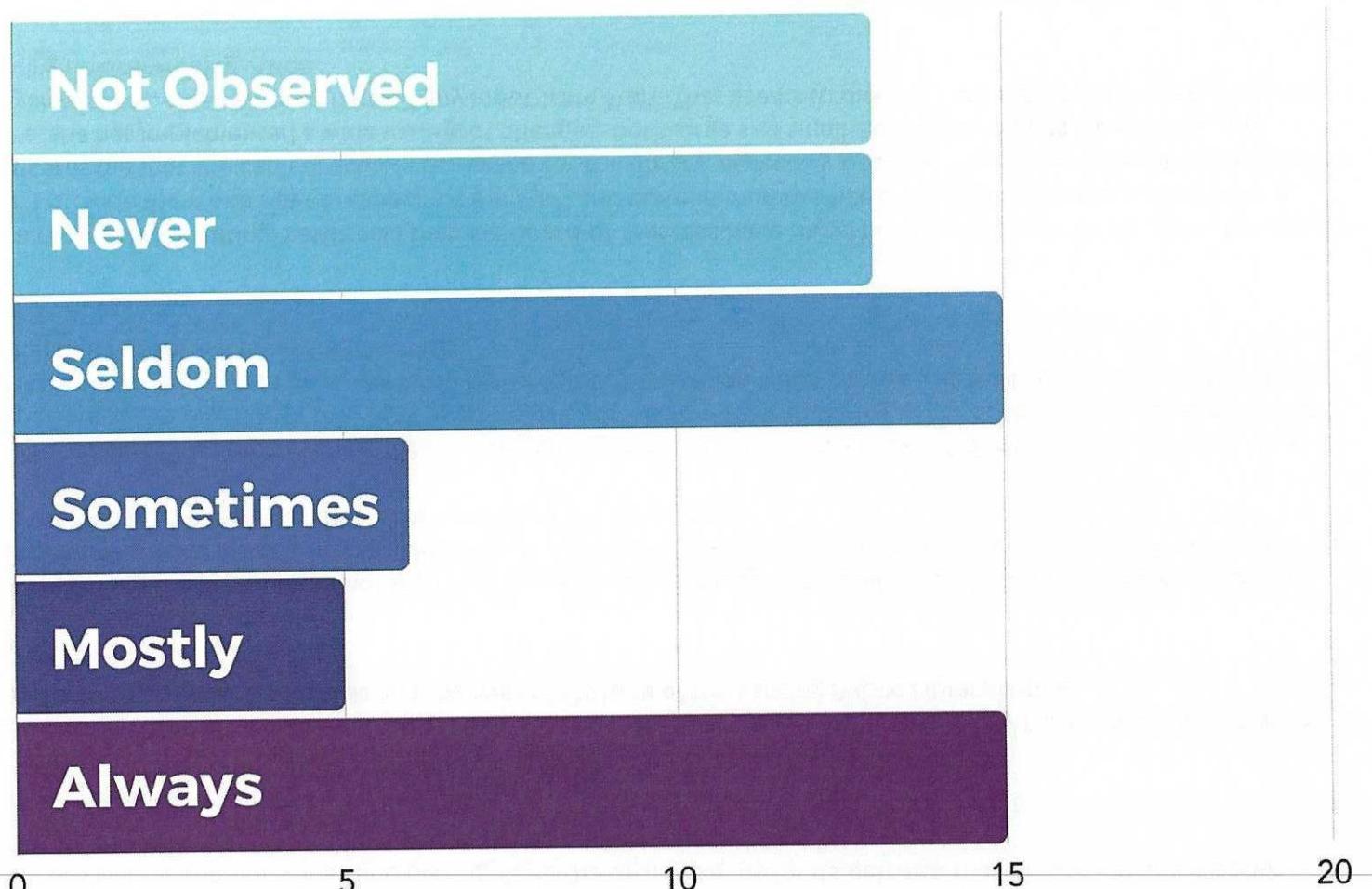


## PART 1

*Inspires a Shared Vision*

1.4

Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision





## PART 1

### *Inspires a Shared Vision*

#### Comments

As a fellow Library Director in Tompkins County, I have had some contact with Leslie but have not been in on her day-to-day decision making or leadership. From what I've seen during our conversations and in meetings together, she is very passionate about libraries and making TCPL the best it can be for its patrons. I have heard her speak about creating actionable plans for her goals, like for the RFID project.

As a patron I have little detail of internal performance, my observation is that the library has been continued giving good service, excellent materials and the overall attitude of the Lansing Public Library is good.

As a patron of the library, I cannot say that I've been able to engage with Leslie closely enough to observe some of these items around vision. Noting TCPL's vision statement: "We envision a library where everyone can belong and find joy in learning, discovery, and personal growth," I will offer that:

Leslie has certainly acted in many areas since coming to the library: I see increased efficiencies around the circulation department, the upgrade in the HVAC system, and now the on-going updating of the collection's circulation format. Whether all of these have been executed in the spirit of the vision, I don't know. The staff seem unhappy; the library collection has shrunk to an anemic state.

At a recent staff meeting, Leslie said that the Board of Trustees have asked her what her vision is for TCPL, but that she can't provide them one out of respect for the staff and our community since she's only been here a short time. It concerns me that she can't articulate her vision for the library, especially because from the very beginning of her time here, she has implemented a wide variety of changes, both large and small, to our procedures, operations, and physical space, often without much if any input from staff. That seems to directly contradict her reasoning for not having an overarching vision.

What is her vision? Fewer books, less interaction with staff? More screens?



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

# Inspires a Shared Vision

## Comments

Discussion of direction and future of the library is minimally open to other points of view. Disagreement or pushback is discouraged, even from those with years of expertise. Community stakeholders are also overlooked if their opinions go against the director's plan and vision.

during foundation board meetings, Leslie has consistently offered her own vision of what TCPL can be. She is endlessly upbeat and positive even around challenging situations. She has engaged with donors clearly articulating her vision for the library and the steps she plans to take to both listen to the community (from users to staff) and weave in her own vision. She has been inspiring while demonstrating support for her staff and their needs.

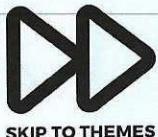
Excellent in direction giving. Wonderful and easy to follow plans. Very enthusiastic about the future for us all. She is constantly sharing new pathways for people and providing opportunity, other staff choose to ignore her.

I barely know Ms. Tabor, as I work at another local organization. I have not observed her in the workplace so cannot provide an objective assessment.

I don't see or hear anything related to vision. The only direction I see is throwing furniture and books in the garbage. A lot of focus on getting books sorted and shelved.

I don't have a clear idea of what her vision for the future of the library is.

We used to work as a close team of Tompkins Together with all the libraries in our county. This now only occurs with the rural libraries. Leslie is doing her own thing with TCPL and occasionally updates the rural libraries.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### *Inspires a Shared Vision*

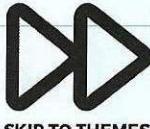
#### Comments

I am a patron at the library with 3 children ages 7, 6, and 2. I have been extremely disappointed in the Tompkins County Public Library since the introduction of the new director for these reasons:

- The decrease in the amount of books, especially classical books
- The difficulty in obtaining classical books through the system, including many which are available after long waiting periods via inter-library loans which have a strict return schedule and are in general a larger hassle to find, check out, and return.
- The increase in the amount of "junk food for the brain" books which are highly modern, have low-quality illustrations, and do not focus on teaching virtues that promote a healthy society.
- The increase in the amount of technology in the library. It is horribly stressful to bring my toddler who, as soon as she sees the computers and TV and Mario Kart at TCPL, becomes totally uninterested in books. She just wants to use the keyboard and mouse (and frequently pulls on the cords), and it makes it a much more stressful experience for me to try to inculcate a love of READING to my children, not a love of being addicted to the games on the computer.
- The fact that Mario Kart and other video games are sold under the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion is completely ludicrous. Children whose parents want them to have a love of READING will be steered away from video games at the library because of parenting; parents who don't care will let their children play. It seems to make inequality worse.

My family and I, instead of going to TCPL which is closer to our home, make the long travel to the Southworth Public Library. I always heave a big, frustrated sigh when I look at the travel time and the mileage that I must travel, but after we get there, I am always GRATEFUL that we chose to go the long distance to Southworth. They have a much more wholesome selection of books, older books, more classics, history, science. They DON'T have the technology in-your-face. They have a sweet imaginative play area with lots of stuffed animals that foster children's creativity. I go to the library to foster in my child a love of reading values-infused literature and I go to the library to GET AWAY from the technology (which every kid in Ithaca City School District has a 1:1 laptop or iPad. Trust me when I say they sit on those devices for hours per day. We don't need more of that!!!!).

It is severely disappointing that TCPL, especially under the vision of Leslie, does not promote reading and high-quality literature and that I need to take my children to a farther away library.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### Inspires a Shared Vision

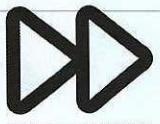
#### Comments

I enjoy reading the TCPL Newsletter including Leslie's letter.

I feel that effective communication between administration and staff has had a learning curve, especially as it relates to the vision for the library. However, we are much better at it than we were six months ago, in large part due to Leslie's efforts to find what works and to improve the work culture at TCPL.

I have never in my 7 years here seen the staff so engaged and active. True, there are a few folks who don't like change and think "this is the way we've always done it" is sufficient justification for anything, but the vast majority of the staff has responded so well to being seen, valued, utilized, and appreciated. Different ways of seeing things like processes and work flows have made the entire operation more efficient and responsive to patrons. I've personally seen staff bloom and grow right before my eyes, people that in the past were told their contributions and ideas were not valuable because of the position they held or status they did not have. It's really energized people to be brought in and encouraged, and it's stunning to see.

I have only had one occasion to interact one-on-one with the Library Director. I am using that interaction to inform these decisions. I had been unhappy about the change to put the reserved books on the shelves that can be accessed by the general public. I was particularly concerned because at that point the slips listed the entire last name of the patron. I have an unusual last name and had received a number of comments from people I know about the books I'd requested. I voiced my opinion and expressed my concern and I was shocked by the entire lack of customer service. I didn't get any sense from the director that my opinion was valuable or even worthy of being listened to. I have been an active member of the library community and I do not believe that my opinion should carry any more weight than any other community member, but I believe that the public library should be a place where I feel welcomed and have a voice. The current director did not exhibit any attitudes in line with this during our interaction.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### Inspires a Shared Vision

#### Comments

I personally don't think she has this library best interest. It's pretty much "my way or the highway". It seems patrons concerns are being ignored.

I think this may be one of Leslie's strongest features as a director. She not only initiated and spearheaded a lot of change (for the better) but empowered and encouraged others to do the same.

I'm not sure what Leslie's true vision for TCPL is exactly. She frequently states she is modernizing the library, but what exactly does that mean? It could mean different things to different people, community groups, funders, etc., but all we hear is she's building a modern library. Does that mean more econtent instead of physical books? Does that mean the RFID project? Without a clear explanation to staff or the community, how is this modern?

I'm not sure what Leslie's actionable plans are. What I do see is staff constantly being reassigned, a director who hasn't taken the time to get to know the community before making drastic changes in staffing, collections and outreach plans. Messaging about the RFID project, weeding and closure for the HVAC system was delayed, late and seemed to be almost an afterthought. Some of the items in those messages was inaccurate and not truthful. Library communication seems to be defensive since Leslie's directorship instead of transparent, welcoming and thorough. That isn't vision.

If creating enthusiasm means long-time staff dread going to work, feel their opinions or feedback isn't necessary, feel threatened to have a differing opinion than the director, feel that there is a spy culture or "tattling" culture that is encouraged by the director and a small number of staff around her, than that's not a library future that can last.

In any interactions with Leslie you get the sense that she is always "library first" in her thinking and her actions. She remains positive and goal oriented, she is 200% on track to provide the library and community with information and opportunity.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### Inspires a Shared Vision

#### Comments

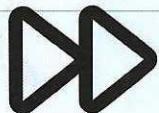
It is hard to parse what Leslie's vision is. Information changes so fast. It's hard to keep up with all the changes and low hanging fruit she decides on. Most of the time the changes feel in the moment and not planned. It would be nice if staff was included and informed before the vision is changed.

It's presupposed that the vision is a shared vision or a good vision. There isn't a shared vision. The library vision is only her own vision. She didn't take the time to see what the existing vision of the library was, what worked and what people in the community liked about it. She just imposed her own vision which seems to be that our library, that she was hired to run, is awful and her "lean and mean" approach is better. She set about to tear down the library as it existed. Her actionable plans included putting employees off balance by taking away their desks and the tasks they've enjoyed doing, shuffling the collection assignments of longtime employees who had maintained and honed their collections for years, creating uncertainty about who was doing what and creating a work environment where everyone is interchangeable and disposable.

As far as creating enthusiasm about the future of the library it is just the opposite. Patrons have expressed dismay at the state of things and said they don't even want to come into the library anymore. Patrons who used to enjoy browsing and staying to read now only come in to pick up their holds and leave immediately. It's not a welcoming place. The director is running things like a corporation with a bottom line. Every decision she makes leans toward downsizing and outsourcing. None of this supports long-term interests being realized by enlisting in this vision.

Leslie brings new energy to the position. She has provided a good general vision for where she sees the library going. at times to meet deadlines, the explanations have sometimes lagged, but given the constraints, this was hard to avoid.

Leslie can have infectious excitement, which is great for most of us, but she also pushed ahead without asking some relevant questions or receiving important feedback from experienced staff. It seemed like she was just really enthusiastic. It's worked out now, for the most part, but it could have gone more smoothly and a little slower.



[SKIP TO THEMES](#)



## PART 1

### *Inspires a Shared Vision*

#### Comments

It's impossible to know what and how Tabor's actions support TCPL's "vision." Although Tabor started highlighting the Library's vision statement at staff meetings., she fails to grasp what it actually means.

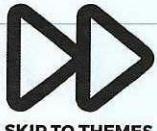
Officially, the "Vision of Tompkins County Public Library" is: "We envision a library where everyone can belong and find joy in learning, discovery, and personal growth." That is the crux of the issue; Tabor impedes realization of the Library's vision by discouraging "joy in learning, discovery, and personal growth" when it doesn't align with her personal agenda. She has little tolerance for opposing voices, regardless whether they're fresh/new voices or voices of experience and expertise.

Tabor's failure and/or inability to translate the library's vision statement into actionable plans results from a failure to expend the time to learn what the community needs and what the community wants through tools such as surveys, focus groups, public forums, etc. and she denies the institutional knowledge of staff who could provide insight and direction.

From comments and discussions with staff, volunteers, community partners and patrons, it's obvious that enthusiasm about the future of this library has waned since Tabor's arrival. TCPL offers fewer programs that help bring the community together, such as book clubs, ESL programs, technological help classes/appointments, writing groups, etc. For more than a year, programs have been curtailed and denied.

Other changes implemented by Tabor affect patrons' ability to access new materials and to browse the shelves for newer releases by favorite authors (i.e. "New" status of a book changed from 12 months to 6 months) and the resources available at this library have been severely diminished due to rapid, severe, poorly considered culling of the collections - often by persons without the knowledge to do so and with blatant disregard for what the community has come to expect to find at THEIR library. Note: Tabor' was advised that, when the change in status of New books was implemented, several years earlier, it was met with complaint and thus discontinued.

If Tabor has a long-term interest other than the RFID project, it's not apparent. For example, no vision for programming and/or community partnerships have been articulated. Likewise, Tabor's tunnel-vision inhibits staff from developing and pursuing long-term interests for TCPL and the community. She's also basically blocked ordering of books from mid-December through the early weeks of January.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### Inspires a Shared Vision

#### Comments

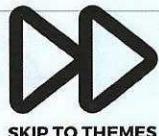
Leslie could be more clear about what, exactly, her vision is for the library and what the steps are that will bring us there. Sometimes we are asked to make changes to our procedures without an explanation of why, or how that will get us to the desired outcome. It seems that Leslie operates in an "ends justify the means" sort of way, which can be jarring and I think staff would appreciate more communication around what the end goal is and why her way is the best way to get there.

Leslie demonstrates a forward-thinking vision for TCPL. In the short time she has been here, she has implemented many beneficial changes to policy and procedure, albeit at a whiplash-inducing pace. At large staff gatherings, she exudes positivity and a spirit of collaboration.

Leslie does not inspire a common vision. She steamrolled the library, got the favor of a small handful of people and silenced every staff member that disagreed with her. People she couldn't silence she targeted and bullied into quitting.

Leslie has a clear vision for the library that she has mostly created on her own with little or no input from staff or the community. Within just a couple of months from starting, she began drastically changing the physical environment of the library, frantically removing furniture and starting a massive weeding project that was based on how the library looks rather than finding how the collection and space reflect the needs of the community first. When asked on an icebreaker to name the song that would be played if she were an athlete walking onto the court, she chose "Wrecking Ball" which is a good representation of how she implements her vision for the library.

Leslie is enthusiastic in all things library, espouses the importance of what we do for and with the community, and stresses how we can achieve goals by working together. She lifts us up rather than keeps us tamped down.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### *Inspires a Shared Vision*

#### Comments

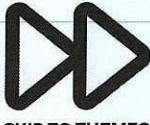
Leslie has a clear and energized view for where she wants to see the library moving, and always incorporates the long term vision into the day-to-day projects and processes of the library. I have never felt more invested and energized by the library's mission until the last year. She has a clear passion for modern libraries and strives to have us meet the high expectations set for us as public servants. While busy, I have found that she is always willing to find time to discuss questions, concerns, or observations I have made in a frank and pragmatic matter.

One area of improvement, which is across the library as a whole and not entirely the responsibility of Leslie, is a lack of clear development for team members wishing to progress internally. We lack a system to 'build a bench', creating useful opportunities for staff to gain the experience needed for advancement under civil service expectations.

I do believe Leslie does her best to communicate the vision and the why, but she has run into resistance from staff when their desires for library work do not align with her vision. I do not think this is a fault of her own, rather an institutional lack of boundaries and professionalism on the part of the staff. Trying to create those expectations is of course challenging, but I think necessary for the betterment of the institution as a whole.

Leslie has a very clear vision and steps to get there. She has more enthusiasm than.... most people I've ever met? Energizer Bunny levels. And optimism to spare. As she often says, "the future is bright!" She LOVES libraries and wants this to be the best library in the country. She makes me believe that we can get there, together! She's excellent at bringing people in and creating excitement around the Library.

Leslie is a visionary and enthusiastic leader, who constantly balances the big picture with the practical steps needed to achieve goals. She truly sees the forest, not just the trees, and works hard to make sure her team at all levels understand the why behind actions. Through regular all-hands meetings she has clarified her vision in her first year of reaching stability so we can grow and meet the needs of our community effectively.



SKIP TO THEMES



Leslie has demonstrated leadership by focusing, first on small wins to get everyone on board and aligned and then setting ambitious goals and inspiring those around her.

## PART 1

### Inspires a Shared Vision

#### Comments

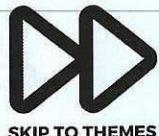
Leslie is great at articulating her thoughts and ideas, in a manner that is very clear and easy to understand. I appreciate her vision of a three-legged stool - a balance between maintaining the collection, providing programming, and providing high quality customer service. She does so with great energy as well as with a positive attitude and approach. I feel that she shines during our All Staff meetings, as she provides updates on what is happening both in the library and the Tompkins County community as a whole. During these types of meetings, she also allows staff to provide feedback on their experiences. I am very happy that Leslie is the Director of TCPL, and I am excited about our future.

Leslie is very explicit about tying in her vision for the library to any projects she proposes for the library. I consider myself fairly on-board with this vision of a modern, popular, circulating library.

Leslie shows little interest in advancing the library in the community or increasing access.

Seems to be selective, lets "smaller" priorities slide. "Too busy"

The director seems to work in a bubble without considering the related libraries in the County



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### *Inspires a Shared Vision*

#### Comments

Leslie makes fast decisions, with unclear reasoning, that have massive repercussions that staff have to account for to the public. The largest example is the extreme level of weeding she inflicted on the collection, removing 46% (a number discovered by a department head at Leslie's bequest) of the material collection. This is NOT normal library behavior. This was an extreme vision, disagreed upon by many longtime professional staff, which was fiscally unsound. This vision leaves the librarian staff members to apologize for and explain her unclear reasoning to patrons who are shocked at the state of the shelves (many of which are less than half full, with whole shelf lengths of books discarded, many in the trash.) Staff members who have had deep love for the organization and enthusiasm about the profession have been knocked down and removed from tasks they excel at. I've never seen such low staff morale in my time at the library. Staff are afraid to speak up because Leslie so obviously targets staff she is intimidated by or dislikes, taking away beloved duties or pushing them to self-demote.

Leslie Tabor does not seem to understand, and certainly does not respect, TCPL's vision and principles as they existed before she started. She knows all the right library catchphrases to say. For example, she'll talk about serving the public - but then displays disdain for the public with every service she cuts, or every time she makes significant changes without informing the public. (A deliberate choice, because informing the public of anything only gives them a chance to "complain" - something she has actually said to us in staff meetings.) We used to believe in providing access to resources to all of our community. Now services, programs, and materials only stay in the library if they're in accord with Leslie's personal whims. She also no longer works collaboratively with the other libraries in the county, nor does she respect TCPL's role as the Central Library for the Finger Lakes Library System, especially in unilaterally deciding to dispose of a significant proportion of the nonfiction titles that belong to FLLS and are housed at TCPL due to its Central Library status. It's important to note that Leslie is very charismatic, and very good at citing all the right library facts and principles...although she misapplies them...so that it sounds like she believes in librarianship and is doing the right things for a healthy library culture. It's critically important that the board think critically and look closer at what's actually happening behind the scenes, rather than blindly taking Leslie at her word as they have chosen to do up to now.

Wonderful ambassador and leader who brings energy and vision to library and community. We are fortunate for her leadership!



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

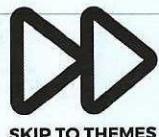
### Inspires a Shared Vision

#### Comments

Ms. Tabor's vision for TCPL is focused on her much-discussed "three legged stool" model of collection, programs, and customer service. She has arrived at TCPL with the belief that TCPL has greatly failed at collection management (among other things), and therefore all of her subsequent decisions are borne out of this deficit framing. Her decision to weed 46% of the collection has been explained to the board and the public, in part, as a corrective measure after years of collection mismanagement. This is not true. Collection management has always been a part of work undertaken by TCPL professional staff, as it would be for any professional librarian. Suddenly we were told that we needed to do drastic amounts of weeding in preparation for the RFID project. Staff were told that the shelves should be less than half full. Nuanced collection decisions made by long-time staff were undermined by favored support staff so that additional weeding was taking place after professional staff had finished a section. Staff were being criticized in meetings and by favored staff in casual discussions for not working fast or hard enough (aka up to Ms. Tabor's standards). Unsurprisingly, community members started to notice the drastic difference in the stacks and started to ask questions, putting the onus for explanation on front line staff. But it is very difficult to support a vision like Ms. Tabor's because it seems to be "well, TCPL was doing a bad job so we had to correct it but now that I'm here we're doing a great job!" She does not inspire a shared vision because TCPL's failure is inherent in her vision for our future.

Thank you for inviting me to fill out this survey. I am a resident of Ithaca and Tompkins County. My family and I have been paying school and property taxes since the early 1950s. Ergo, I am paying the salary of the director and other employees of TCPL. I do not know if the director has a mission statement. I do not know what her goals are for the patrons or the library itself. I have never seen the director in the library. I do not know what she looks like. I come to the TCPL twice per week, various times and days of the week. She should take a stroll through the library once in a while.

The direction that she provides with regard to a vision is hers only, which negates to meaningfully attempt to include the skills of others who might not fully share the vision. Plans are either foisted upon others, thinly informative or not at all inclusive but are required to be followed through pressure. The enthusiasm she creates is often hers alone, with buy in from some because they fear her or think they will get something from her in return.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 1

### *Inspires a Shared Vision*

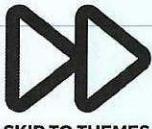
#### Comments

The Director has been clear that TCPL can not go forward and services need to be reduced until our internal house is in order. While outwardly enthusiastic with buzzword phrases such as "The future is bright" and "Ever upward", no clear goals, vision, or plans for the future have been communicated. She has announced that she intends to focus on the community next year, but qualifies that with expectations of staff to take on responsibilities in this area with no clear actionable plan or purpose introduced. In my opinion, because she does not seem to have any vision and is not focused on, and does not respect the community, there is no vision or long term goals. It feels like her goal is saying no to anything the community requests. The vision shared seems to be focused on staff compliance, chain of command, cleaning house, and shelving every book immediately. She spends a lot of time on the floor and is not spending time on mission and vision.

The vision seems to be flawed and not shared by all, even other library personnel

This is a tough question for me because I have only experienced her hyper-optimistic view of her vision for the library, parts of which gave me serious pause. Leslie has never exhibited any measurable care for those who have suggestions or questions other than to plow through the conversation with euphemisms and negatively delivered responses like, modern libraries do not operate in the way you are suggesting - or if they do, they are not on the cutting edge, or that's not how the library I worked for/directed/ visited did things. I believe some of the suggestions I made could have saved her a lot of the current grief she is experiencing from the community.

Also, Leslie, like her predecessor Annette, both have/had an aggressive anti-silo-ing campaign which creates much division between staff. She is very critical of staff who try to suggest we already deliver cohesive and strong customer service, (while we are open to change, especially when ideas are collaborative amongst staff and not just sent down the chain with no regard for suggestions or constructive criticism.) So, no shared inspiration for her vision for me personally, although those she favors and showers with positive attention and support are, understandably, more favorable to her vision.



SKIP TO THEMES

Vision is behind the vast majority of Leslie's communications that I see. The only issue she may have is an over reliance on library jargon that nonprofessional staff may be unfamiliar with.

# Inspiring a Shared Vision - Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis



## Vision & Leadership

Many comments discuss Leslie Tabor's vision for the library. Some respondents praise her vision and enthusiasm, while others express uncertainty about her vision or criticize her approach to implementing it. There is a recurring theme of her implementing changes and making decisions without clear communication or input from staff and the community.

## Communication

Communication is a significant theme in the feedback. Some respondents mention that communication between administration and staff has improved under Leslie's leadership, while others express concerns about the lack of transparency and clear communication about the vision and changes happening at the library.

## Changes & Efficiency

Leslie is noted for implementing changes in various aspects of the library, such as weeding the collection, upgrading systems, and making operational improvements. However, there are differing opinions about whether these changes align with the library's vision and whether they have been communicated effectively.

## Staff Morale & Involvement

The feedback includes comments about staff morale and involvement. Some staff members feel empowered and appreciated under Leslie's leadership, while others mention concerns about staff morale, feeling unheard, and a lack of involvement in decision-making.

## Community Impact

Several comments touch on the impact of Leslie's leadership on the library's relationship with the community. Some express concerns about the library's ability to serve the community effectively under her vision, while others mention positive interactions with donors and community stakeholders.

## Library Space & Collection

There are mentions of changes to the library's physical space, including furniture removal and collection weeding, with varying opinions on the impact of these changes on the library's functionality and atmosphere.

## Collaboration

Some respondents note a lack of collaboration with other libraries in the county, suggesting that Leslie's leadership has shifted the library's approach to working with neighboring libraries.

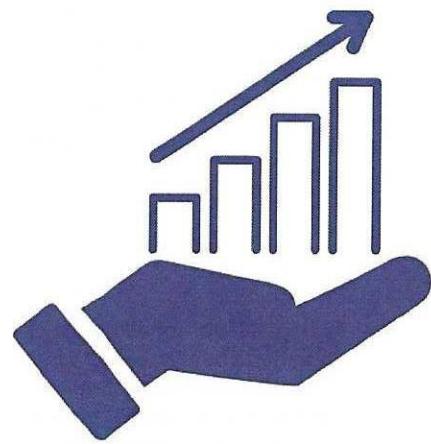
## Enthusiasm & Positivity

Leslie is commended for her enthusiasm, positivity, and energy, which some respondents find inspiring and motivating.

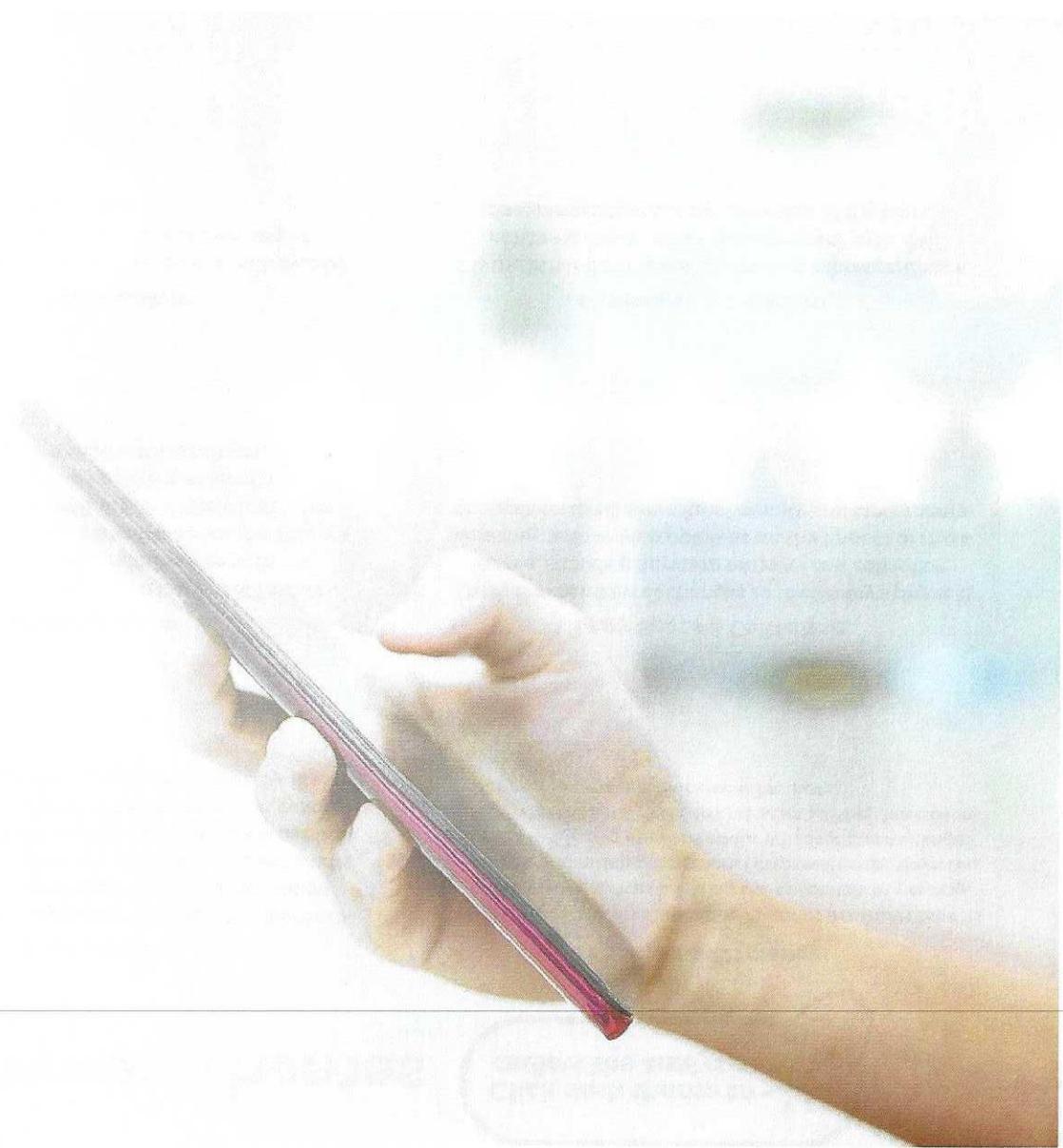
## Challenges & Criticism

On the other hand, some comments express criticism, concerns about Leslie's management style, and disagreements about the direction of the library.





## Part 2: Delivers Results

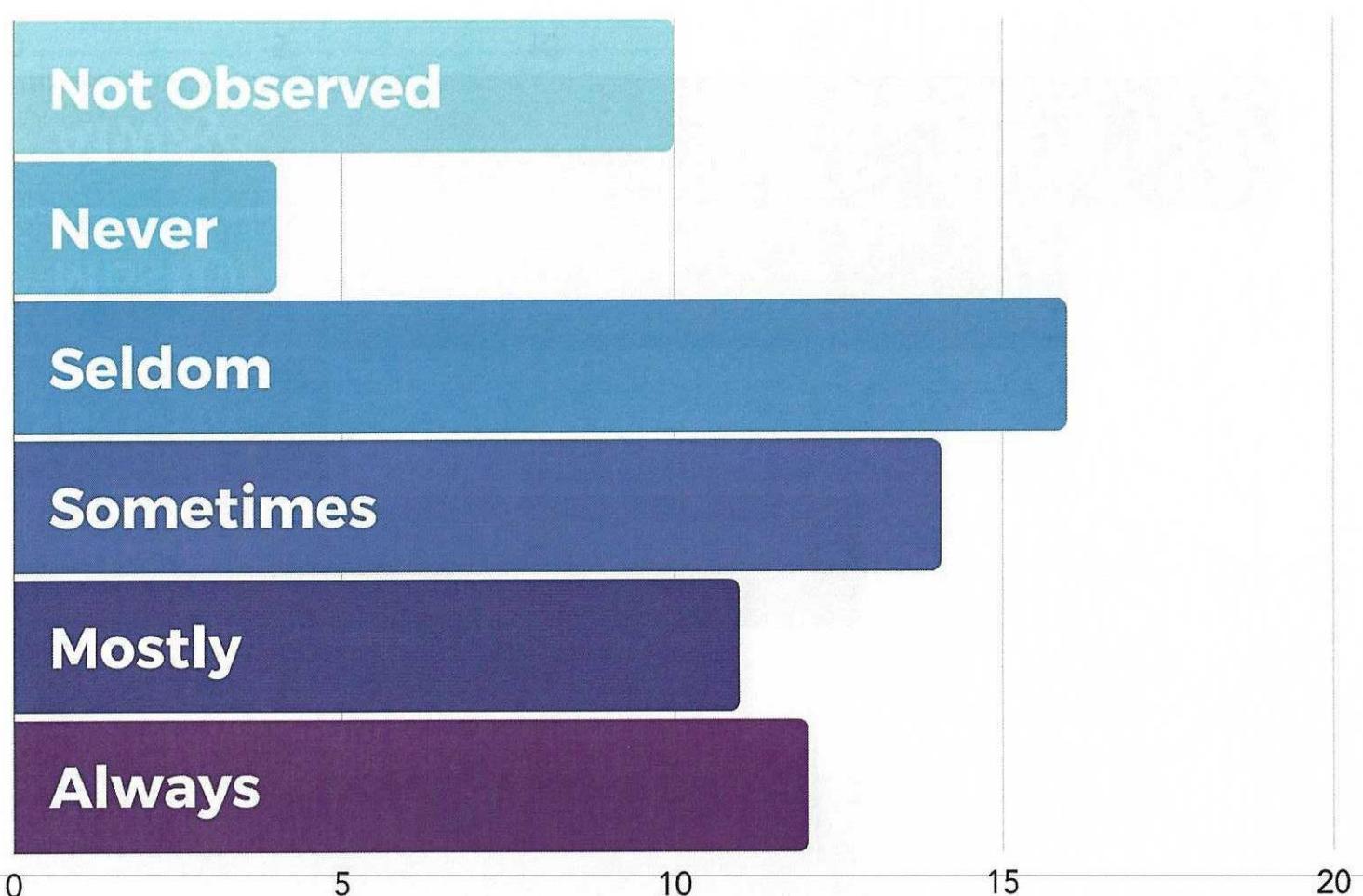




## PART 2

### *Delivers Results*

2.1  
Makes Appropriate  
Decisions

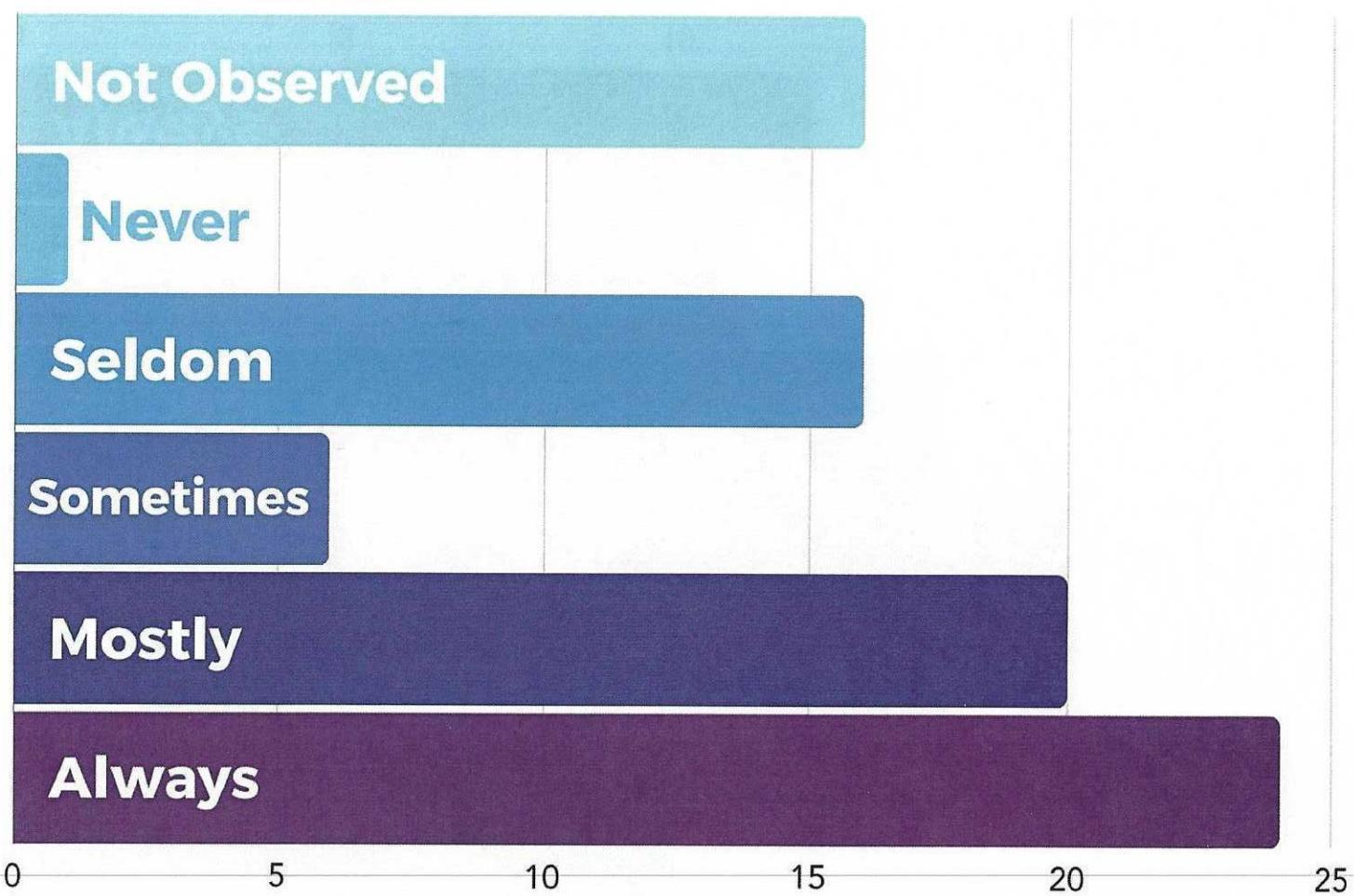




## PART 2

### *Delivers Results*

2.2  
Acts After Making a  
Decision

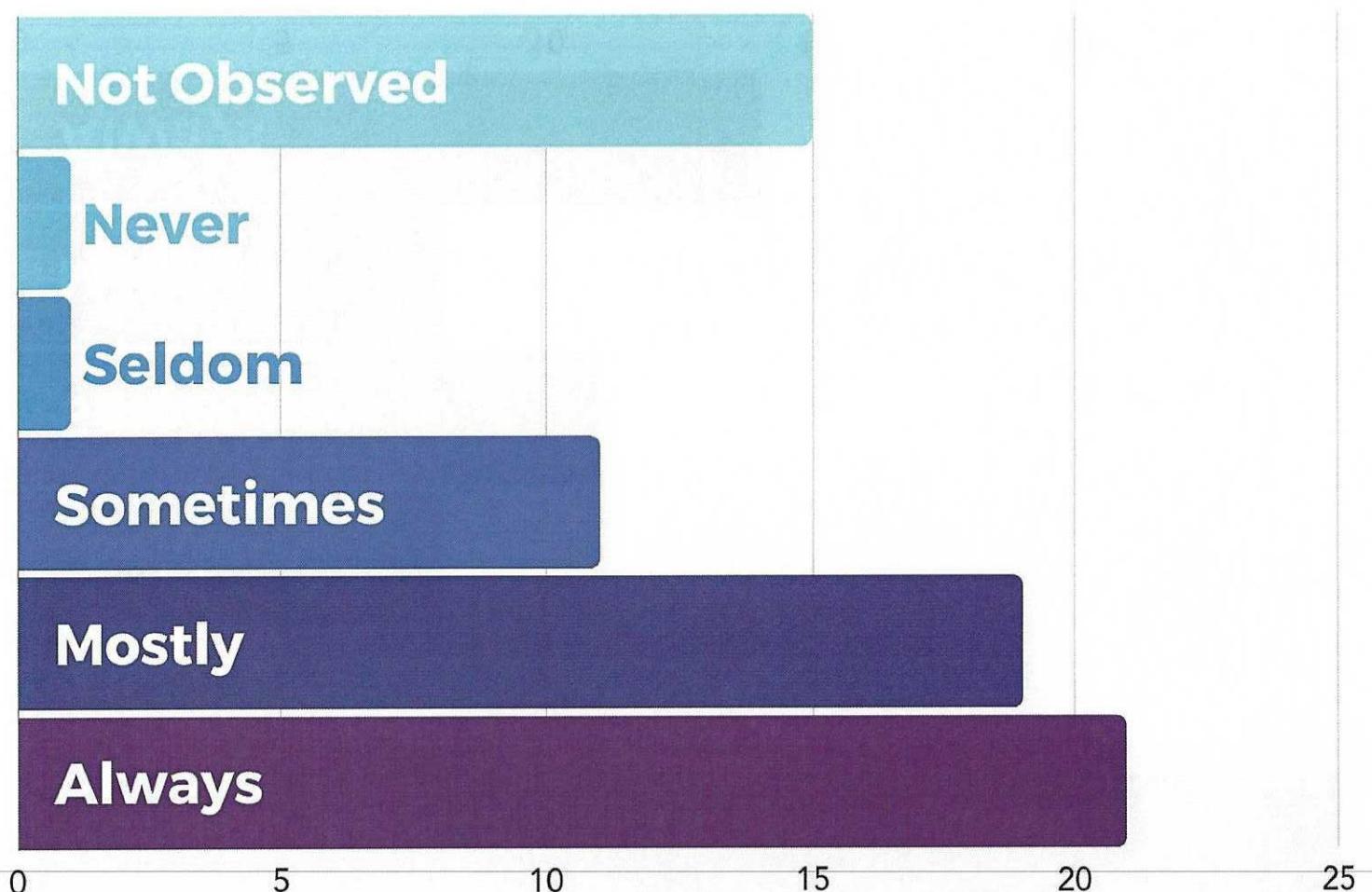




## PART 2

*Delivers Results*

2.3  
Takes Risks



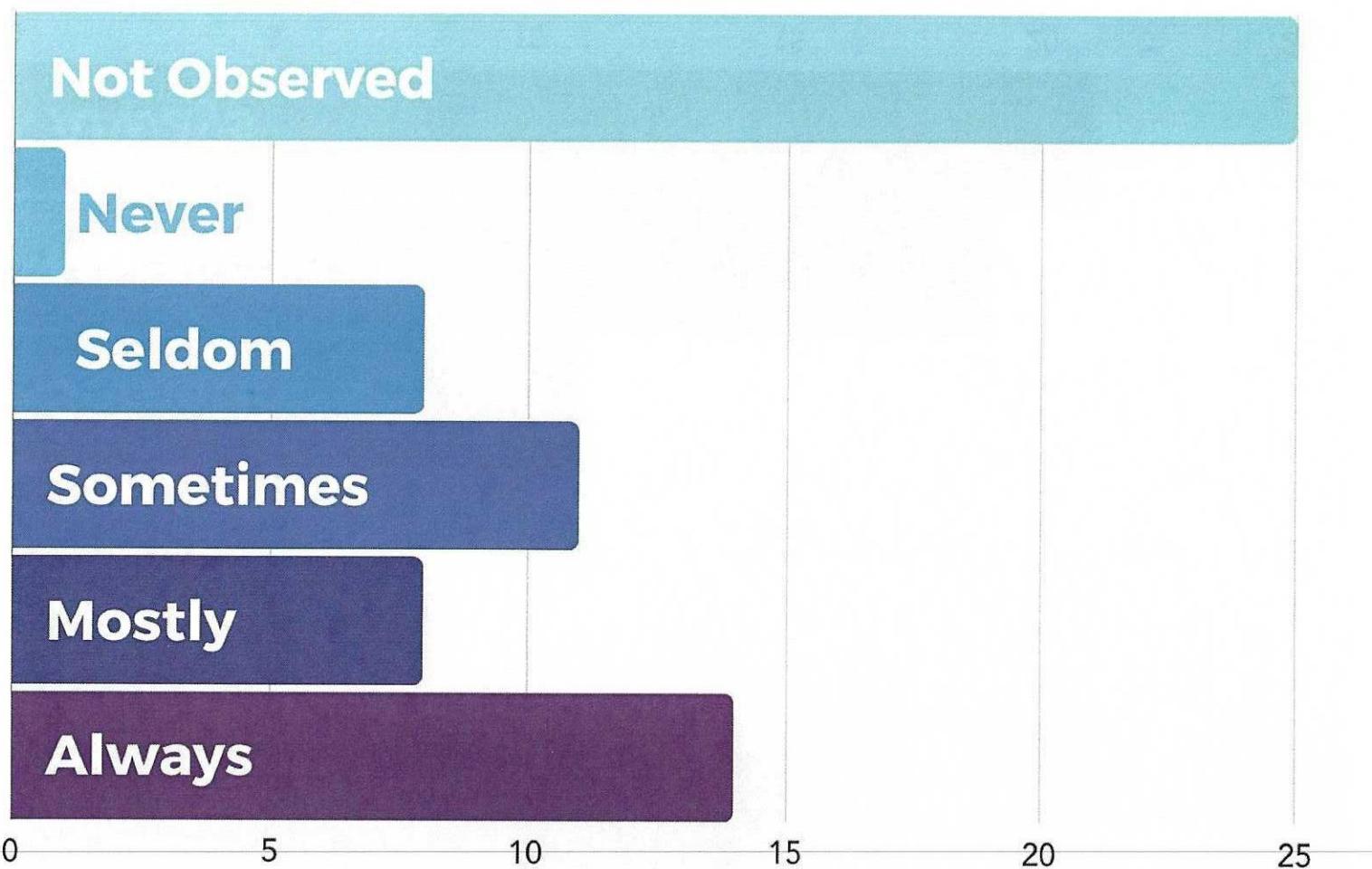


## PART 2

### *Delivers Results*

2.4

Encourages Others to Take Risks

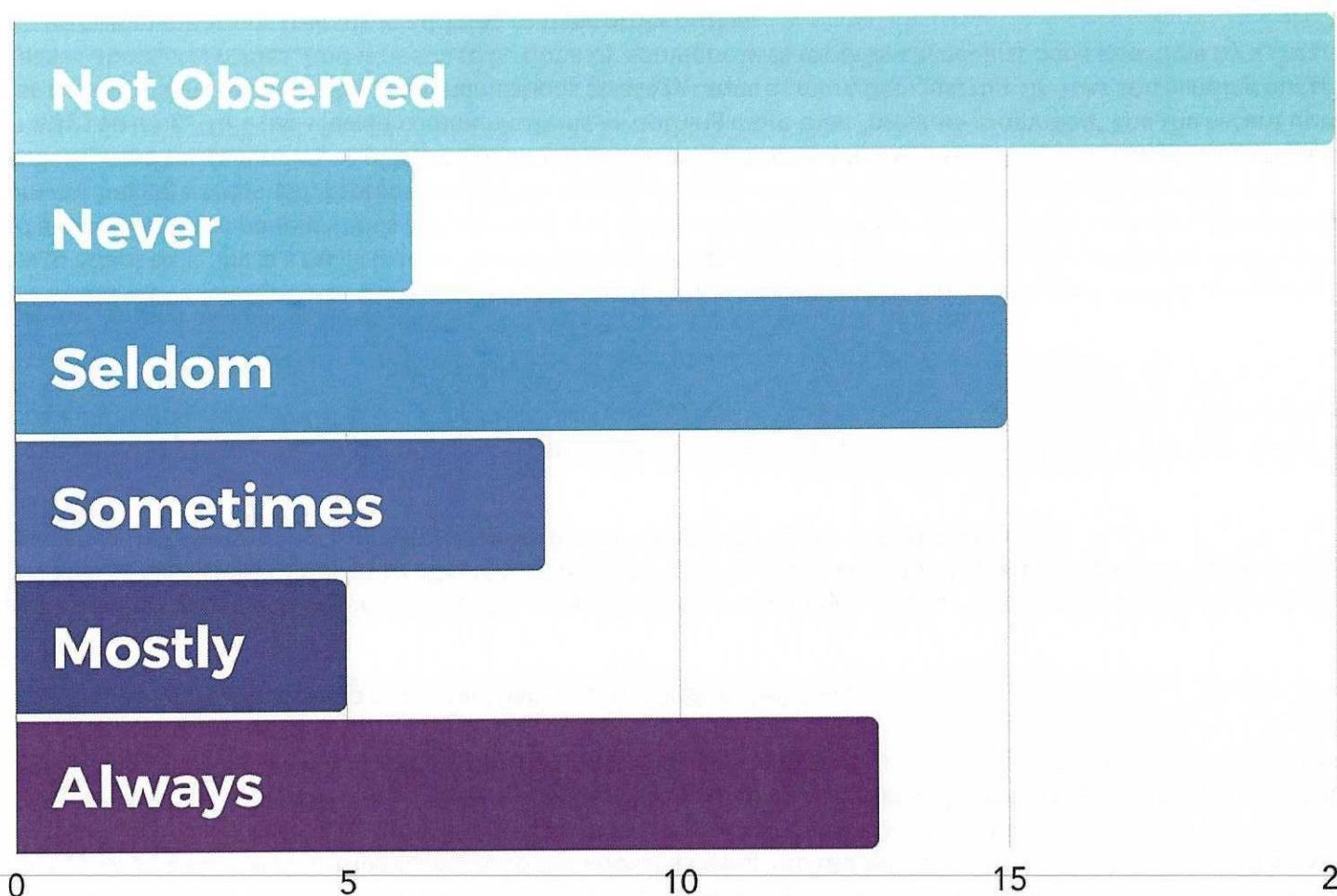




## PART 2

*Delivers Results*

2.5  
Supports the Decisions of  
Others





## PART 2

### *Delivers Results*

#### Comments

2.1 She made some good decisions such as the staff training while library was closed, but also many not appropriate decisions: getting rid of the wooden book dividers on the book shelves of the picture books (causing books to not be able to stand straight and causing damages to the books), getting into the weeding project without clear instruction so as a result, our library lost many great picture books that are out of publication indefinitely.

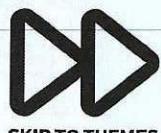
2.2 She acts immediately after she's made a decision without even letting the staff know about her decision a lot of time. For example, many times when we came to work in the morning, we found that one more piece of our furniture that we'd been using was thrown away.

2.3 She does not really listen to our suggestion, not to mention decisions.

Again - Leslie is very much on a mission to "modernize" and "build equity" at TCPL, regardless of and impervious to any problems or miss-steps or opposite effects this mission might have on staff and the public. And again, it's my personal experience that she does not support the decisions of others, as she does not support mine.

As explained above at length, I do not believe Leslie's decision to decrease the amount of books in the library and increase the amount of "junk food for the brain" technology and video games is the right decision for the children who visit the library.

As it would with anyone new to the area, it will take Leslie some time to learn the unique culture of this community and how to adapt to it. She is a quick learner and very observant, though, and I think she's already picking up on the quirks and anomalies of the people in this area and that will make anticipating public reaction easier. Honestly, she suffers from not having a seasoned, professional public relations/ communications pro on staff to advise, manage media relations, read the temperature of the community, and administer external and internal communications strategies. For way too long, TCPL has viewed communications as nothing more than "program promotion" and the recent uproar over weeding is the result of this. Communications strategy requires more than just fun Tik-Toks and sending out press releases about storytimes. And it needs to be done by someone with experience, not just done part-time by a librarian with no communications training in addition to their other duties.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 2

### Delivers Results

As the leader of TCPL, Leslie will not please everyone - that's not possible. The decision to reduce the library collection in advance of the circulation system's upgrade, was, we could say, appropriate.

However, watching the collection dwindle, finding fewer books at the library and more books through inter-library loan has been a heartbreak for me. I don't like shopping for clothing or things, but I love browsing for books - it is a treasured time to see the possibilities across a shelf that I can touch, page through, and enjoy. This aspect of going to the library has been diminished for me - I often have to scroll through the catalog now to learn that I can find a few books on a topic, but certainly have to use inter-library loan for more books that I haven't gotten to "preview" first.

I am no novice with inter-library loan, I've used it for years, but the reduction in the in-house collection is, honestly, underwhelming.

At times the decisions feel appropriate while others seem from out of nowhere. Risks can both be positive and negative it's hard to see this difference with Leslie's leadership. Many times, I question her justification for decisions. Especially those she gives numbers or data for, the data is not well explained or justified.

### Comments

Big vision, big risks.

Decisions of others are limited in the narrow scope given by director, if any choices are given at all

Definitely can "make things happen" on her agenda, but in her rush to get things done, makes snap decisions based on her emotions and personal judgements without understanding all of the issues. Doesn't often allow others to make decisions. Maintains tight control over everything.

I'm not sure what results she was responsible for delivering.



SKIP TO THEMES





## PART 2

### Delivers Results

#### Comments

Her decisions are seldom appropriate. As director, it is understood that Leslie will make decisions that support TCPL's future, however that support can be measured in many ways. And she often makes decisions about money, time, staff and resources that jeopardize the future security of TCPL and ability to meet the mission of TCPL.

Her decisions are terrible. So glad my kids got to use the library before she decimated the collection.

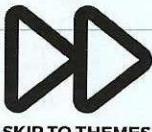
I barely know Ms. Tabor, as I work at another local organization. I have not observed her in the workplace so cannot provide an objective assessment.

I feel supported and able to grow in this library under the current management structure with Leslie at the helm. We are encouraged to try things and if they work, awesome, and if not, we reconfigure.

I feel that Leslie makes decisions with confidence. She often draws upon her prior library and consulting experience to help explain and create an understanding for staff on how she reached the decision. I have also seen her consult with other staff members before committing to a decision. One example is the Polaris LEAP training that she provided to all staff members. During these trainings she empowered staff to assist patron access to materials by waiving overdue fees - "Make it Right." She also empowered all staff to assist patrons with the checkout process by letting us know that we are free to check materials out to patrons at any desk in the building, not just the circulation desk. Reducing the number of barriers (fees, long lines) is just great customer service and a benefit to our patrons.

I have had the pleasure to be part of the leadership team as an interim department head and have always felt supported in my decision making, even as a new person to the organization and the role. I am inspired by how bold Leslie is and how she owns her decisions, never skirting responsibility and recognizing when things could have been done differently or did not go according to plan.

Leslie has demonstrated visionary risk-taking, something that has been much needed.



[SKIP TO THEMES](#)



## PART 2 Delivers Results

### Comments

I have heard from friends who know people who work at the library that it has become not a great place to work these days. Apparently everyone I have heard from feels unable to speak up about changes in the library about which they aren't happy.

I have noticed rapid change, mostly positive, since Leslie took over. In my own position, I've been trusted with more responsibility that I believe to be commensurate with my capacities as a library worker. The weeding project has made the shelves significantly more manageable to browse and quite frankly has helped us remove a lot of outdated, duplicate, and damaged books that did not reflect well on us. Overall I think the library is more user-friendly than before, and I'm pleased with how quickly the changes happen.

I have observed Leslie making decisions to change her library services for the better and then following through with action. I would say she sometimes takes risks from what I have seen, because she is tackling some big projects and issues as a brand new Director, which I think is necessary to lead.

I see that the Library Director has helped to bring about a lot of change. As a community member it is difficult to know with all of the changes the library has undergone in the past year how many are attributable to the director. The lack of transparency and communication with the general public is a problem in my opinion and to bring about more communication and transparency would go a long way to help this to once again feel like a public, community institution.

I think this is very subjective. While Leslie does empower us to try things and take the lead, she's also very conscientious of what is and is not within the purview of Library and each of us as professionals. Leslie will not hesitate to let us know when something is out of our scope.

In short, sometimes we take calculated risks but we're not very good at math. Leslie makes sure we check our work.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 2

### Delivers Results

#### Comments

If she feels her idea is meeting resistance, the next time she speaks about it, she includes a talk about her reasons, and why we're "moving forward". In some cases, she has said if something doesn't agree with you, maybe the library isn't the place for you.

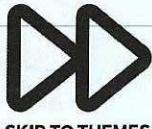
In my experience, she makes decisions quickly. Occasionally this leads to communication issues where potential problems that could have been avoided through a more deliberate, collaborative approach. A lack of supporting department heads followed by the interim department heads did tend to consolidate decision making under her for a time. However, this seems to be reducing in frequency as the department heads have been filled, even if they were interims.

Is it appropriate for a library the size of TCPL to have weeded over 40% of their print collection and not be truthful about that number to staff, the board or the community? Not by any library standard. Is it appropriate for a library the size of TCPL with the number of professional librarians to have weeded that number of items yet still have hundreds of books on weeding lists, proving that acceptable library standards were not used during the weeding process yet telling staff, the board and the community that ALA standards are being used? Not by any library standard.

If taking risks means that more staff in the history of the organization have been written up (some multiple times), been placed on performance improvement plans, been placed on leave, been encouraged to leave (most notably long standing department heads) or disrupting staffing by constantly moving staff between departments, then Leslie is a risk taker. If taking risks means that Leslie talks in a demeaning way about staff in staff meetings, in department head meetings, in work spaces that can be overheard by other staff, to her colleagues and peers, then she's a risk taker.

It can be hard to determine whether Leslie expects individual action vs. collaboration with her. There have been times when staff has gotten punished for taking initiative and doing a great job and other times when staff is celebrated for the similar things.

Not saying that her risk taking is in the best interest of the library



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 2

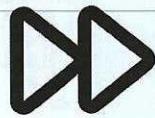
### Delivers Results

#### Comments

Leslie "delivers results," but only in the sense that she only does whatever she's already decided to do, and doesn't listen to anyone else's concerns. She doesn't support the decisions of others and certainly does not encourage anyone to take risks! On the contrary, retribution is swift and extreme toward anyone she perceives as having a different opinion from her - or even those she decides to target for no reason at all. Staff members have been demoted, fired, threatened with demotion, threatened with firing, put on unpaid leave, formally written up for invented infractions, etc. if Leslie decides to make them her enemy. This sounds unlikely and extreme, but it is very real. Please, please take it seriously! You will also hear the opposite from a small but extremely vocal cadre of Leslie's chosen favorites. She decided early on who would be her special favorites who would be showed with opportunities and promotions, while at the same time she has threatened and terrorized all the rest of the staff. So there are a small number of staff who will claim that Leslie can do no wrong, is an amazingly supportive boss, has made TCPL such a safe and wonderful place to work, etc. This may be true - for those small number of staff who are her chosen few. Please take seriously that you will hear these wildly diverging accounts from staff, and the perfect, rosy picture is not the only one that is true.

Leslie has been a champion for library staff. This means not just being highly encouraging and supportive, but also calling people out when they're being less-than-professional or not pulling their weight. This seems harsh to some, but it also encourages people to be better employees and takes the burden off the shoulders of staff who are fully doing their jobs. Leslie isn't concerned with always being liked, but she does seem to genuinely want us all to be happy and the best version of ourselves.

Leslie has made some appropriate decisions regarding the extension of our digital offerings including adding Hoopla and extending hold and renewal limits which have been appreciated by patrons. Leslie is definitely a risk taker which is admirable but she has failed to create buy-in from the staff and community before making many of these changes. Had the community and staff been more involved and clearly understood the changes in regarding to weeding, RFID, etc., things may have gone much smoother and we wouldn't have had several board meetings with angry and upset patrons. Staff weren't given a chance to understand and ask questions before decisions were made. When staff expressed concerns or confusion over changes, her responses were very dismissive. She does encourage staff to take risks if she agrees with the risks planned.



[SKIP TO THEMES](#)



## PART 2

### Delivers Results

#### Comments

Leslie is committed to her TCPL staff and encourages them to be individuals within the organization. From what I have seen she is inclusive and community-forward.

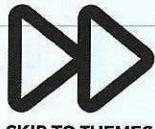
Leslie is decisive and very action-oriented. As her direct report, I appreciate that she encourages me to try, and is totally supportive and open to hearing "I tried \_\_\_\_ and it didn't go well for these reasons..." She's incredibly supportive and respects people who TRY and put themselves out there. I think she finds a lot of joy in bringing her human, imperfect self to work and is happy when others do the same. She's a great person to grow with.

Leslie needs to empower the folks that she leads. She needs to delegate. This is somewhat hampered by the fact that 2 of the 3 department heads are not permanent hires yet. But, that's coming soon.

One of the affects of trying to do too much is that somethings get put on the back burner. There have been times where she'll say something like "We'll have the department heads take lead on that" to me, but then I don't see that she's communicating that clearly out to the dept heads.

Leslie only supports the decisions of others if they mirror her own decisions or flatter herself. I have never met a more imbalanced leader. She targeted the older staff, the experienced staff, and women with children creating an intensely hostile work environment for them. 7 people have quit or been fired by her in 1 years time. Every person who has quit or been fired has expressed that they were unbearably harassed by Leslie, and feared daily for their job.

Leslie takes risks, but I do not view this as negative in any way. She is fearless in trying new things to better the library and provide better services for our community. She encourages others to try new ideas and see what works for each department as well. As a staff member, it is nice to have some level of autonomy in this - when we notice a problem, we are able to find solutions and implement them ourselves, making the process quick and easy while still communicating with supervisors/administration. Leslie has encouraged this, and given direction as needed.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 2

### Delivers Results

#### Comments

Leslie talks about this frequently during our meetings. The need to move the library forward and to both challenge people (again users and staff) to imagine new ways the library can engage and support and to meet them where they are. She has talked quite a bit about listening to others while maintaining her own vision for the future.

Many of the changes that Leslie has spearheaded have been welcome and positive. It would be nice to see a bit more collaboration and open discussion surrounding policy changes so that staff at all levels feel heard and that their feedback is considered.

Ms. Tabor is very quick to make decisions and get results. She clearly wants to be seen as a change agent, and a risk taker. Unfortunately, the changes she makes do not take into consideration their effect on community and staff. She does not provide a safe place for collaboration. Staff who question decisions are labeled "reactionary" or "paranoid." Favored staff are encouraged to take risks, but most staff are afraid they will be reprimanded. Ms. Tabor's approach to the weeding project was ill-advised and rushed, leading to undue stress on the staff and the public. A 46% reduction in the collection is a massive loss to both TCPL and the Finger Lakes Library System, and should be thoroughly questioned and investigated.

RISKS is what I have seen in many areas - unlimited check outs, or at least beyond a practical amount that anyone could use. 50 DVD's???

6 renewals, if no holds, seems to be a recipe for losing library materials. And with no fines, except eventual replacement fees, there isn't much motivation for keeping track of materials either. Or the length of time could just make it difficult for some types of people to keep track of their check outs.

The decisions made in connection with the other Tompkins County libraries were made without any consultations or considerations of our operations or collaborations



SKIP TO THEMES





## PART 2

### Delivers Results

#### Comments

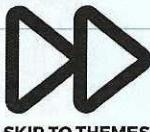
She has been very passionate, responsive, and efficient in righting the wrongs of the past. She has been reasonably and practically "leveling the playing field". We are all equal. We are all informed and have input. She is easy and reasonable to talk to, as long as you come to her with respect and dignity. Other staff are used to providing a displayed outburst to get what they want.

She has made some inappropriate decisions. The most upsetting of all is in the way she's dealt with the large weeding project that was undertaken. Care was not taken to allow selectors to carefully weed. It was a real slash and burn. When the Friends couldn't take more books, the withdrawn books were thrown into the trash. When patrons became upset after finding out about this, she had the withdrawn books be hidden in black plastic bags before being thrown into the dumpster. And then she said that everything she's done has been in the open and claims that there were no lies. She decided to get rid of keeping statistics of the number of books withdrawn and then had to have someone run a report, that most likely couldn't catch all of the withdrawn materials, to guess at the number when asked for that information, leading the numbers to seem like there were less books withdrawn than actually were.

She makes decisions but that doesn't mean they are good decisions. She doesn't support the decisions of others unless they're her favorites and she does clearly have favorites. She's socialized with at least one of these favored employees outside of work and that feels inappropriate to me.

She's definitely not afraid to try something new or tackle large projects. Some of these projects have gone very well, such as streamlining the reshelfing workflow and the closure for HVAC improvements. Given how much has changed in the past year though, it has definitely felt overwhelming at times, especially since it's not always clear why the changes are happening. It often feels like she's comparing us to other libraries and finds us lacking.

Very encouraging with her peers and creates an atmosphere of belonging



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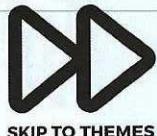


## PART 2 Delivers Results

### Comments

Tabor has made many inappropriate decisions.

1. Changing the status of "New" books from 1 yr to 6 months inhibits patrons' ability to learn about and find recently published material by authors they follow. Despite numerous complaints from patrons and staff comments, Tabor's inappropriate decision stands.
2. Changing the automatic renewals policy on items borrowed to 6 renewals can boost circulation stats (falsely) but doesn't truly reflect use. Tabor's decision is merely a numbers game and follows the path of "Circulation is KING" but, since patrons have little incentive to return a book on time, one who is browsing the collections may never have the chance to come across it on the "New" books shelf before it shifts to the regular stacks. This is a library, not a book store.
3. The rush to race through reducing the number of items for RFID implementation decimated TCPL's collections, especially in certain areas, and her decision prevented thoughtful evaluation of what to remove and what to replace.
4. Tabor's moratorium on programming meant fewer opportunities for the community to come together.
5. Frequent change to individual staff responsibilities, as well as department leadership, has thrown staff off-balance for more than a year and disrupted operations of selection, ordering and processing of materials.
6. Cancellation of curbside service especially affects patrons with mobility issues, as well as parents with young children who appreciate the consideration and convenience, especially in this neighborhood of parking limitations.
7. Wasting resources - Tabor's decision that staff who are paid at professional librarian rates ought to do the work of pages and clerks is financially irresponsible.
8. Ordering - Although books are published year-round, Tabor's decision to curtail ordering during the latter half of December and at least the first half of January puts our patrons at a disadvantage in terms of getting the new books in the new year.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 2

### Delivers Results

Comments on Inspiring a Shared Vision

Themes

While I do not believe that the results she delivers are good for the organization, or benefit the community, Leslie does deliver results. The results are that 46% of the books have been discarded, much furniture has been discarded with little input, public programs have been halted and discouraged, and favorite staff have been chosen, while others are ignored. She “supports others” and “encourages staff to take risks” IF they are part of her inner circle. Such favoritism is evidenced by who is chosen to be on committees, who gets promotions, and who is given the leeway to make changes to their work tasks and duties. There are about 6 staff members whom Leslie has chosen to elevate, while she ignores and removes tasks from others - largely the professional staff, whom she seems uninterested in communicating with or actively avoids. When I personally have reached out to Leslie for feedback on a project, I have received no responses repeatedly.

#### Positive Themes

1. Ms. Tabor is seen as a quick learner and observant.
2. She encourages staff to try new things and take risks.
3. She takes decisive actions and supports those who try.
4. Ms. Tabor is seen as a champion for library staff.
5. She has made some positive changes, such as extending digital offerings and streamlining processes.
6. Ms. Tabor is committed to leveling the playing field and being inclusive.

#### Negative Themes

1. Some decisions made by Ms. Tabor are viewed as inappropriate or not well-thought-out, such as the weeding project and reducing the in-house book collection.
2. Lack of transparency and communication with the community is a concern.
3. Ms. Tabor's decision-making process is sometimes questioned, especially when it comes to justifying decisions with data.
4. There are concerns about favoritism in staff interactions and promotions.
5. Some staff members have felt unsupported or targeted for having differing opinions.
6. Rapid changes have been overwhelming for some staff.
7. Communication issues arise from quick decision-making without collaboration.
8. Some changes are seen as negatively impacting the community, such as the reduction of physical books and curbside service.



## **Part 3: Focuses on the Customer**

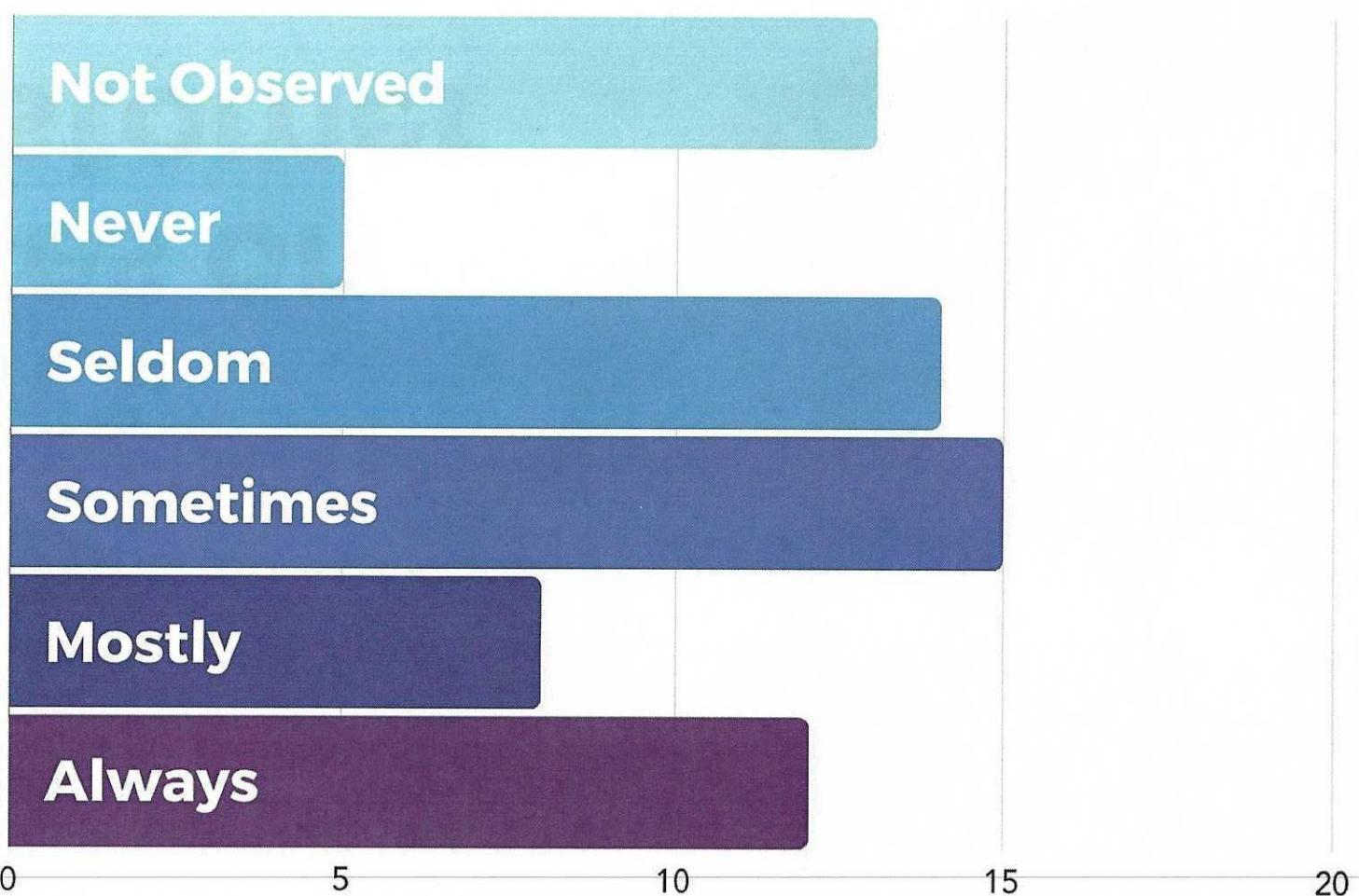




## PART 3

Focuses on the  
Customer

3.1  
Anticipates Customer  
Needs



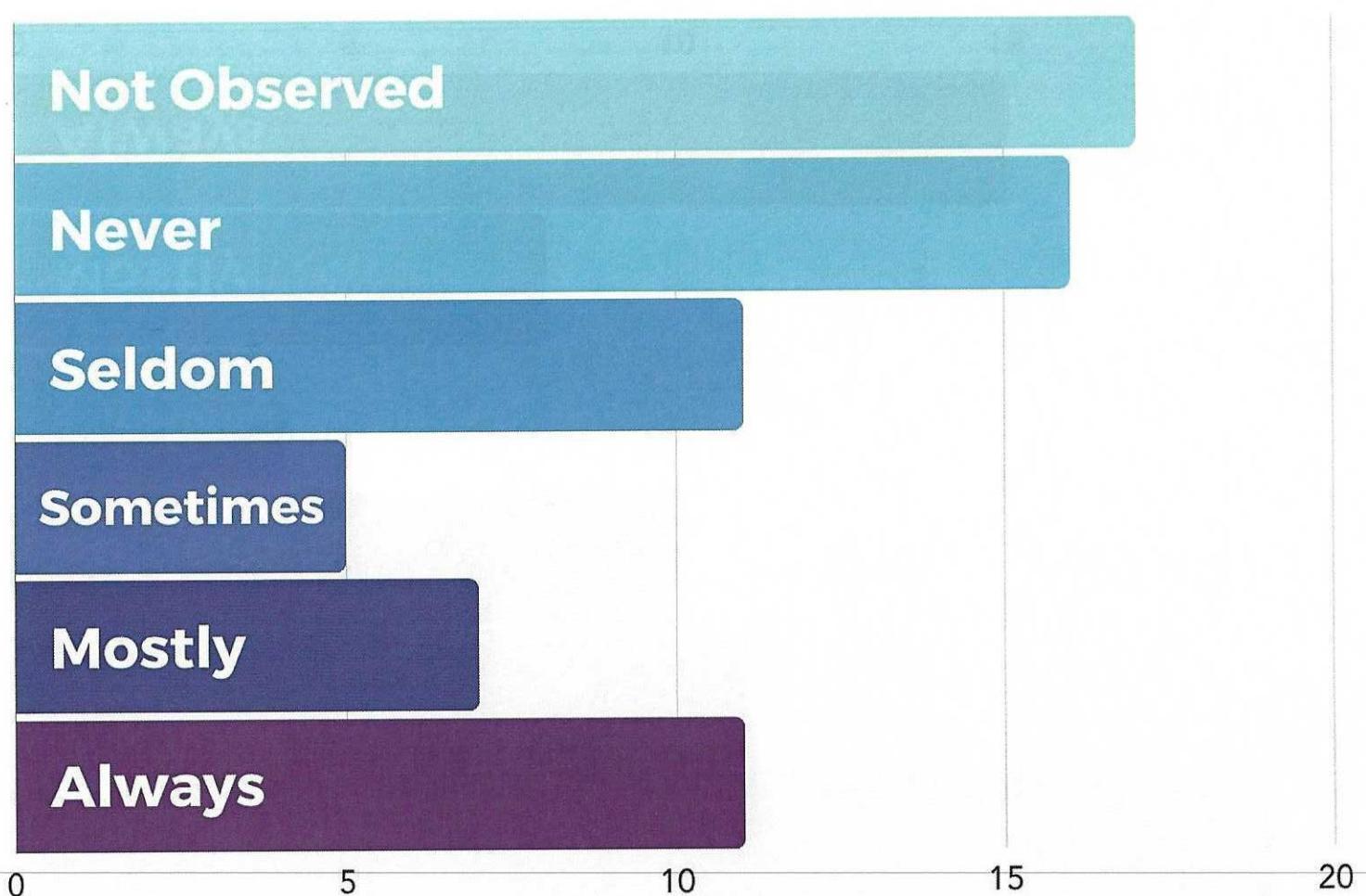


## PART 3

Focuses on the  
Customer

3.2

Seeks Customer Feedback

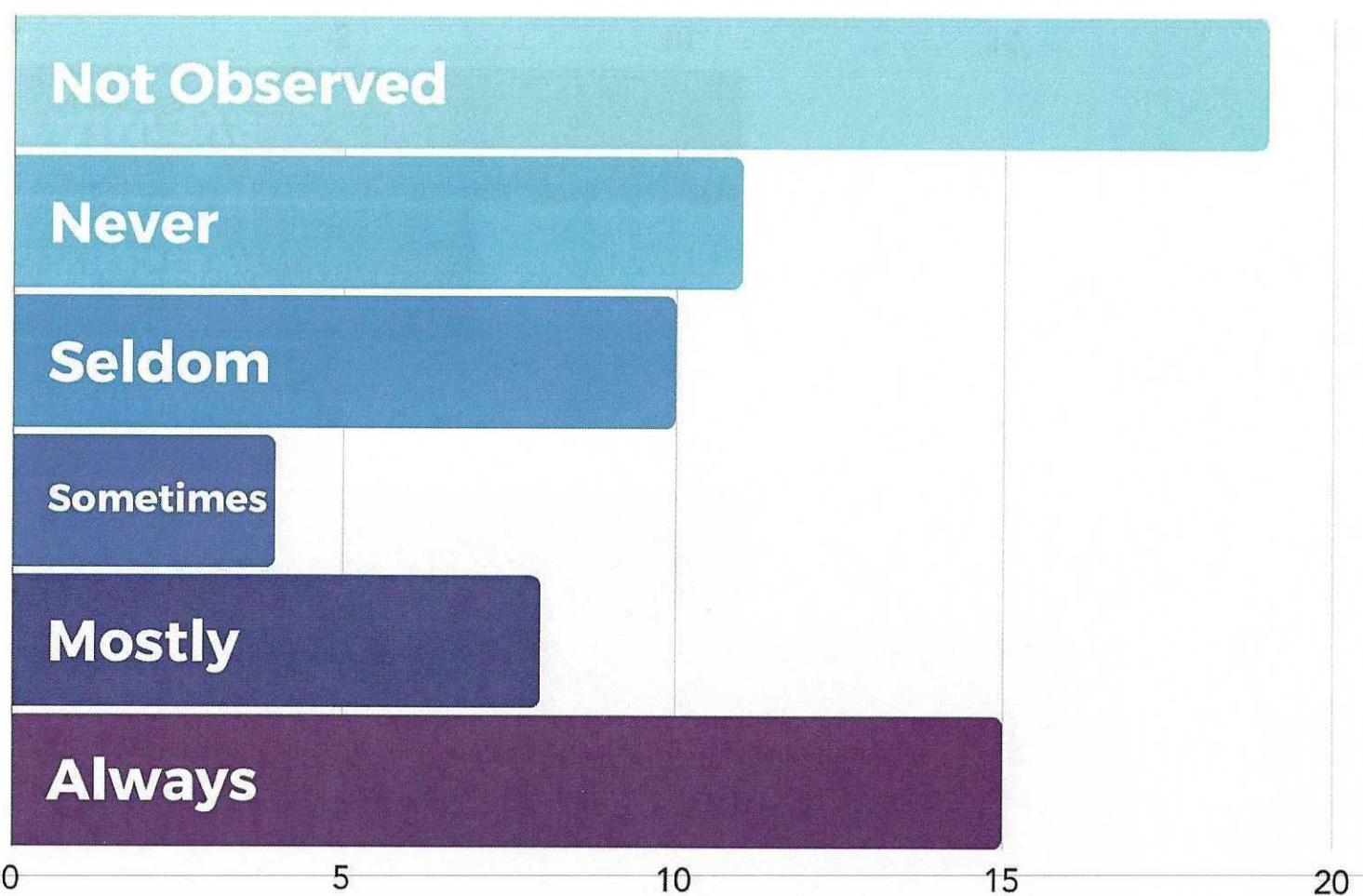




## PART 3

Focuses on the  
Customer

3.3  
Responds to Customer  
Feedback



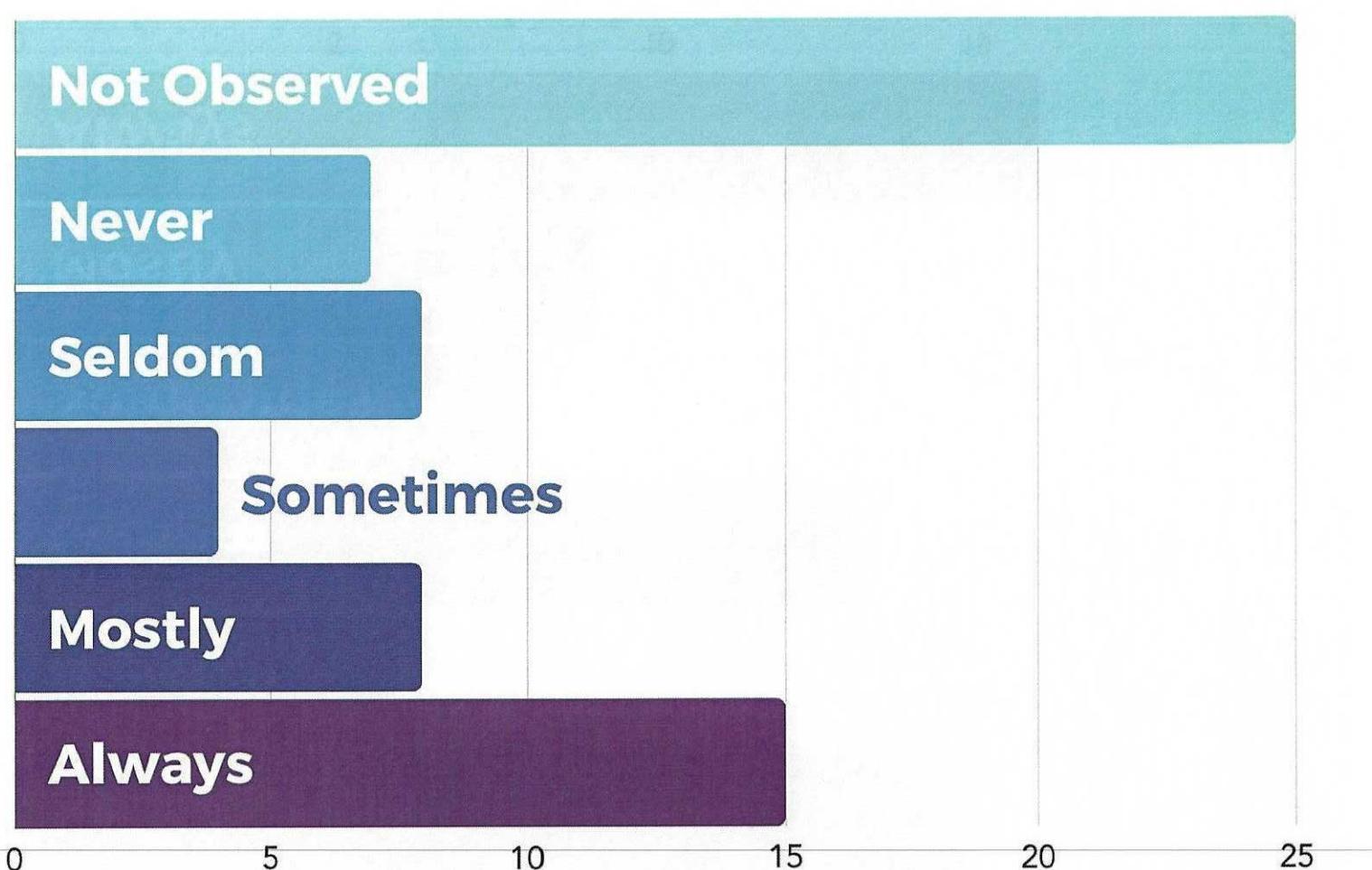


## PART 3

*Focuses on the Customer*

3.4

Models Customer Focus in Interactions With Customers



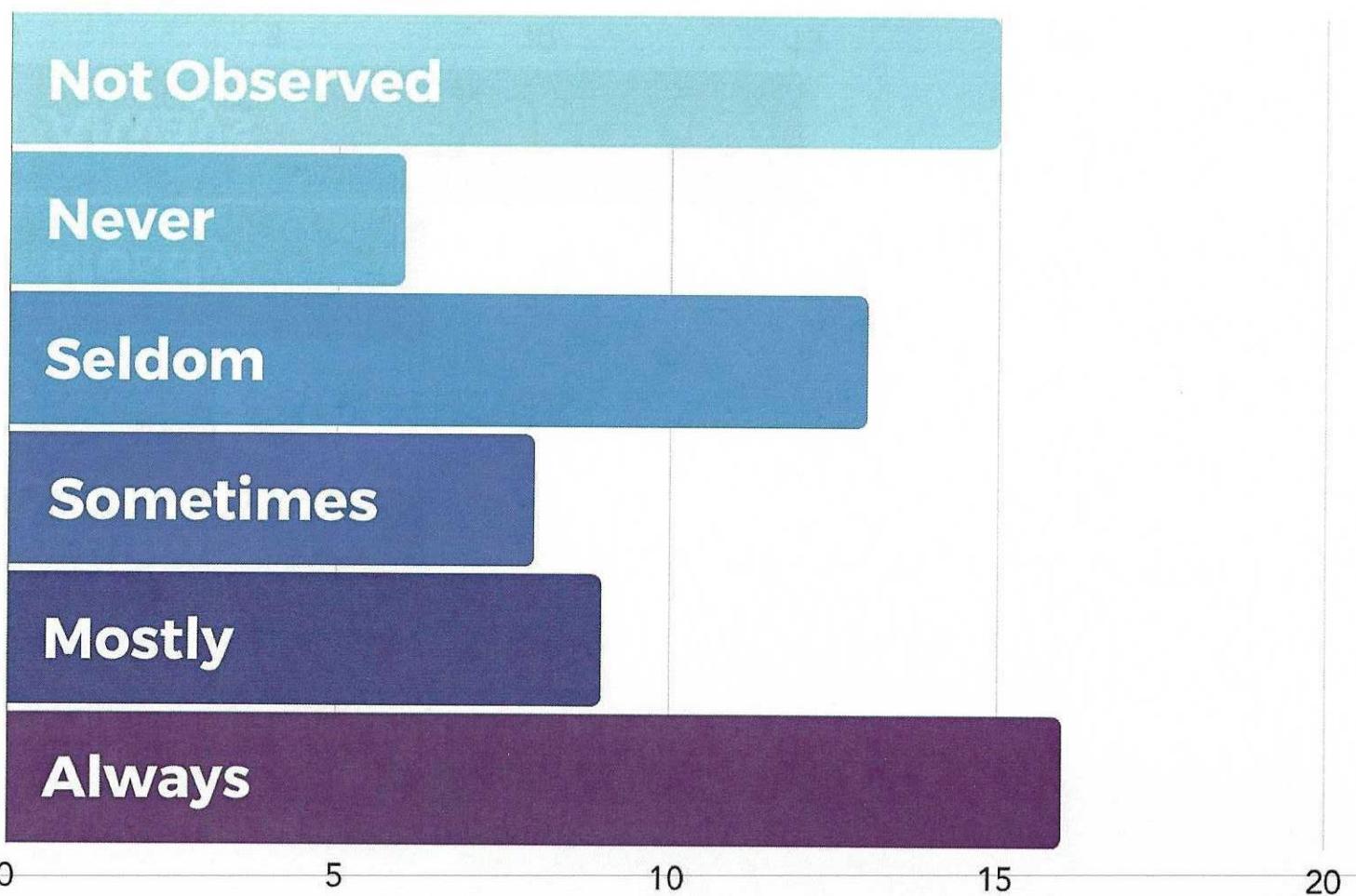


## PART 3

Focuses on the  
Customer

3.5

Helps Remove Barriers to  
Excellent Customer Service





## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

3.2 & 3 She didn't take some customers' feedback about weeding well, and didn't respond to customer feedback in a constructive way. Instead, she asked all staff members not to tell the customers their real feelings and thoughts.

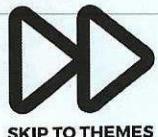
3.2,3 Removed the suggestions box and welcomes very little feedback.

3.2,3,5 When library personnel are afraid to speak out about things they think need to be changed, there is a problem. When some personnel "report" on others for not supporting the vision with customers, there is a problem.

Again, as I said in the previous comment, it takes time for someone outside our area to learn how Ithaca people are and react. Having done this for 20 years now, I know you can't apply the strategies and assumptions you would in other comparable areas here. At the risk of sounding precious, Ithaca is its own unique entity with demands and needs very different from anywhere else. Learning how to anticipate and navigate that takes time. But again, if there was a communications pro/public relations officer on staff, this wouldn't be such a problem. There is a definite deficit in TCPL's communications strategies because of the lack of a dedicated, experienced professional doing this work. Someone in this role would be able to advise Leslie on how the public will react to changes and programs and how to counter that or get in front of that messaging successfully.

Anticipation example - recently Leslie moved the Local Voices section to a more prominent location near the holds and it looks really amazing. I have seen her respond to email inquiries in a timely and thorough manner. I have also been impressed as she works side by side in all departments, from circulation to youth services to adult services when needs must. It's really wonderful having a director who is able and willing to jump in when we are busy or working on special projects.

I am assuming that in this instance "customer" means "library patron". I am not sure how directly Leslie interacts with patrons on a day-to-day basis.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

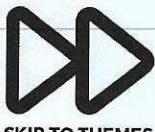
#### Comments

Again, as stated above, in my one interaction with the Library Director, I did not feel that my feedback was welcomed. Initially the Library Director seemed interested that I had something to say. However, once I got into the content I did not feel that the Library Director was open to any opinion that was contrary to what the Director thought. The Library Director's response to my concerns and criticisms was just a defense that this is what other libraries do and that this is a common standard in libraries. The Director stated that when the reserved books were at the circulation desk the employees would see the titles and in my thinking the professional staff that works at the library is trained to be discrete, just like the staff that works at my doctor's office who can view my medical records. I trust the library staff much more with my private books choices than any person who can walk into the library. I did find it interesting that some time later the library changed the slips with the reserved books to only include the first 4 letters of the patron's last name. It seems I did raise somewhat of a valid complaint, however it would have been so lovely if there was some public communication from the library about this, like for example, a sign that said, "Due to response from community members we are now only showing the first 4 letters of your last name to protect your privacy."

As above, Leslie has demonstrated over and over that, despite paying lip services to all the right words, she does not care about the public or have any interest in hearing from library patrons. (Starting right with the fact that she refers to patrons of the library as "customers"!) I have heard from many patrons who contacted Leslie directly with a concern (and they had to go directly to her, because so many other avenues of feedback for library patrons have been removed!) only to receive a brush-off and/or a response telling them why they were wrong and she was right. (Rather than engaging with patron feedback and actually listening.)

As we recently learned in our board meeting, the community desires better communication/more transparency from the library. I feel that we have already been getting better at that, as with the HVAC and RFID FAQs, as directed by Leslie. Leslie is also never afraid to talk to patrons one-on-one, which I admire as modeling above-and-beyond customer service.

I appreciate the policy & response from TPCL's customer's requests (e.g., getting new books suggestion, the returning of hoopla.)



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

Aside from encouraging us as individuals to experiment and innovate collaboratively, Leslie has given a great deal of focus on customer service. Emphasizing this as the frontlines of the library and intrinsic to our responsibilities as library staff.

Doesn't seem to be very concerned with how the community responds or their opinions or requests. Has cut services, programming and resources. Enabling self serve holds for the public was a great advancement but I think that was motivated by staff time savings rather than public convenience.

Has responded negatively to public criticism of weeding and encouraged others to publicly disagree with community comments on social media, escalating the situation. Her message seems to be that the public is ignorant and not qualified to criticize what happens at the Library. Views the public as the enemy. Does not have a "public servant" philosophy.

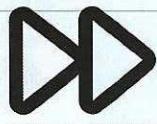
Gone are the days where one could come to the library to study, read quietly, and work on personal projects. The library is a chaotic place where the employees talk very loudly-- at times at street level tones. They seem to think the library is their living room or kitchen. Patrons follow their lead and talk very loudly also.

It is so bad that many times I have left the building.

In the past, there were many disturbances caused by patrons. I never saw so many police officers in one place like in the library. It's gotten better now that everyone has a smart phone and doesn't need to use the computers. However, the loud talking is annoying.

I barely know Ms. Tabor, as I work at another local organization. I have not observed her in the workplace so cannot provide an objective assessment.

I believe Leslie feels she is exemplary in the subject of customer service. At certain times she does show good communication skills with patrons. Then, there are often occurrences when she gives a misspelled joke that makes the situation uncomfortable at best.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

I am not an employee of the library and so my experience of the director is therefore limited. Speaking as a patron of the library, however, my need for a library filled with good books is no longer met by this library. A year ago this library met all my needs, but now--because of the withdrawal of 44% of its collection--this library does not.

As a library patron I have no way of knowing what involvement, if any, the library director had in this decision. But my experience is that the library under her leadership no longer meets my needs as a patron.

In addition, the library no longer meets the needs of my daughter either, as the children's reading area is now in her words "a difficult place to read."

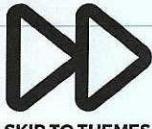
Although communities share similarities, public libraries have also appreciated that each one is unique. A cookie-cutter approach to library management doesn't work in Ithaca and Tabor defies learning that. She hasn't been here long enough to know what the customer needs, nor does she respect the advice of staff, patrons, and/or community members who don't agree with her.

Since Tabor doesn't seek out general customer feedback via surveys or other tools of evaluation, complaints arise but she rarely responds except to reinforce to staff that the "Library" must "appear" to be united and on the same page. Optics are the main thing for this director.

Her lack of courage and integrity is obvious by the fact that she can't be bothered to show up, even it means adjusting her schedule, at Board meetings when large numbers of the public are expected to express their opinions regarding changes. This is the public library and a conversation with patrons is essential.

Although TCPL is the Central Library for the FLLS, Tabor has shifted the burdens that FLLS must now carry in terms of ILLs so that patrons can get materials. Unfortunately, this means that patrons must wait days, weeks, or longer (or never) to get items.

The Library website used to feature a "Patron Comments" section which is no longer active. It was helpful to read both praise and criticism but Tabor bans public dissent and patrons have complained that Tabor doesn't respond to complaints. Staff are afraid to dissent.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

I didn't experience anything first-hand, but heard reports from others in my community that when some youth patrons raised complaints about the empty bookshelves as a result of weeding, and the distracting video game system up on the wall in the children's section, that they were rudely dismissed, belittled, and accused of parroting their parents, but I don't know who did that or if it's true. It doesn't sound very good though.

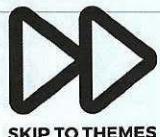
I feel that recognizing and providing great customer service is one of Leslie's strengths. I mentioned a couple of examples above, but something else that I have observed is how she interacts with patrons in the public areas of the library. She is energetic and enthusiastic and, most importantly, she is sincere. Leslie also leads by example: she is the first TCPL director that I am aware of that facilitated a regular children's story time event - Family Music Story Time, every Sunday in October. The energy in the room during this event was very evident to those in attendance.

I feel that the current conversation around weeding and RFI implementation is an excellent example of this. Leslie listens but also offers clear and thoughtful explanations of how this work will better serve the community. She remains focused on the end result

I have not observed Leslie interact with any library patrons or other stakeholders that could be considered "customers." I have seen her remove barriers to customer service like trying to improve staff workflows and making sure staff are posted at desks at library opening.

Ithaca is a very opinionated city. I think Leslie's one big mistake was not pre-emptively explaining the weeding project to the public. It let rumor flourish and had a lot of people more up-in-arms than needed to be the case. Overall, however, the focus on service at the library is top notch and I think it runs downhill to our staff as a whole.

Leslie does not list to opinions which do align with the current diversity, equity, and inclusion narrative. Specifically, she believes that video games are helping increase DEI, whereas it is only making the achievement gap bigger. Please see my first long explanation for additional details.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

I give Leslie credit for opening up different services at different desks - such as being able to get library cards at reference desks or checking out items.

Things that concern me about customer feedback: the patron suggestion box has been removed since Leslie's start. Leslie's phone extension is not visible on the library website, which is required by NY State Minimum Standards. Letters written to the director about the removal of picture books on top of the bookcases in Youth Services was met with ridicule to staff and the letters were made fun of to staff. Feedback from the community about weeding was met with criticism about the patrons, including emails to the staff and board from Leslie explaining that those patrons had mental illness or were community disruptors. That is not how a library director should be speaking about her community to anyone. Why is the board not questioning this type of behavior?

Long time display cases were disposed of to the Reuse Center instead of offering them to other community not-for-profits or even other libraries. Book drop returns that were purchased by grants from the Town of Ithaca were scrapped/recycled instead of offering them to other libraries, which would have gladly taken them due to the cost of purchasing new book drops. Questions regarding those actions were met with "it's a sight line issue" and no other explanation. Is this an appropriate disposal of items purchased with taxpayer, donor or town money?

In general, I do think that Leslie's vision for the library is good but, again, when the ends justify the means, the process of getting there can be bumpier than most people would like. It seems like Leslie could have spent more time getting to know our community and found better ways of managing change instead of just going full speed ahead. Now we are receiving a great deal of criticism from the public. Some of that is unavoidable, of course, but some of it could have been precipitated with more up front communication with both staff and the community. The message since feels like anyone who disagrees is just a squeaky wheel and we are going to ignore them, regardless of whether the patrons have a reasonable critique.

No one can anticipate every need- and this community like all communities has needs a plenty, but I think Leslie does a good job communicating and being available to people who want to talk to her. She is always professional with patrons, and engages with them all the time. Modeling this is good for all of us to see.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

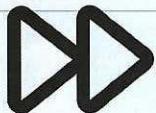
### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

Leslie centers all of our work around the patron experience and \*resources\*. I love that she's encouraging us to let technology support us and make our processes more efficient so that we can do more human-to-human work. We've never before had someone who encouraged us to use the tools available --- or someone who has just \*known about the available tools\*!!! For instance, our relationship with Baker & Taylor was not working. Leslie took the time to track down a Rep at a NYLA. A couple months later, we've completely transformed how we use B&T, to make staff's lives easier and make the customer experience so. much. better. She listened to customer and Board feedback about how, as the central branch, we need to have the hot books available ASAP. No excuses for a library of our size and budget. And she made it happen. She's also just fantastic with patrons and spends as much time as she can out on the floor, talking to people. She invites everyone who reaches out to her to coffee, regardless of if they're sending her praise or hate mail. She is a marvel!

Leslie confuses me, because she seems to not focus on the customer, but what is a library without a customer? In a field without profits or pay raises, I find myself stumped by Leslie's behavior and do not understand what drives her decision making. Customers are upset and confused, and the communication that is being provided to staff is unclear and easily misinterpreted. Providing robust programs benefits and garners goodwill from customers, but we were instructed not to offer programs beyond the basics while RFID was being implemented (a task which is being completed by a few individuals, but certainly not the full staff.) Customers who express concern are labeled bad actors, and met with derision, and if staff agree with their concerns, we're labeled trouble makers. She said in an all staff meeting (during the HVAC closure) that she has never lived somewhere where the people were as "cruel" as they are in Ithaca - a statement I fully disagree with. She has created an 'us versus them' attitude about the public, which is not how a library should operate, as we are public servants.

Leslie has been very customer focused since arriving. As she has made changes to better serve our general public, there have been some specific complaints from specific community members. These issues have received consideration, even if the final decision has gone in another direction. Overall, I would describe her customer focus as excellent.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

Leslie purposely removed the patron feedback box from the library when she took over. She instructed staff to ignore patron complaints because she claimed we librarians "knew better than them." She has created a culture where many patrons feel they have no voice in their own library now. Many patrons have complained to the board, Leslie, and librarians on staff. The board continues to support Leslie in spite of mountains of negative feedback.

Leslie puts a strong emphasis on customer service. While the Ithaca community can be very emotional (and sometimes irrational) over change, I hope that she does listen to feedback and consider the needs that are specific to them.

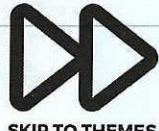
Leslie responds to customer feedback very defensively if it is negative, and vociferously if it is positive. She encourages staff who can empathize with patrons who have concerns NOT to do so, but to only accentuate the positive, regardless of the questions and unhappiness generated by her vision of staff and the public. I am happy to say there are some good positives in the changes that have been made by Leslie, but the negatives and questions and suggestions among staff and community members is pointedly disregarded by her in staff meetings and emails.

Leslie seems to be increasing barriers to access. We have had multiple complaints from patrons and stakeholders.

Negative feedback from our patrons is ignored and those that speak up are disparaged to staff as being wrong or troublemakers impeding the library's progress. We are a community organization funded by tax payers, we should hear feedback without assigning negative labels to certain speech.

Several friends have been vocal about the youth services area and the removal of a large percentage of the books, as well as the removal of the books on top of the book cases, but there has been no action toward bringing back the things that helped people use the library better.

Staff interactions are not barriers to customer service. They are opportunities to build community.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

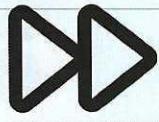
Leslie said that "Ithaca is the cruelest place she has ever lived." during our professional development training. She acted so quickly and without input that she upset people and doesn't seem to see that her acting without input from the community created the conflict. In addition, she blamed staff for "credibility leaks" when the public brought up concerns of things they could clearly see on their own. Staff were then told by the library lawyer that they can't express concerns about the library's functioning to anyone outside the library without risk of being sued.

In terms of removing barriers, Leslie quickly erased two services that the public appreciated for its removal of barriers that were born from the COVID response which were curbside service and book bundles. The library is very tricky for those with mobility issues and small children due to our limited free parking and terrible winter sidewalks. When the public asked about this, she was unwilling to reconsider. She also removed much-loved book displays on top of shelves, more accessible drop boxes and passive programming (which she sees as clutter) all which were serving to remove barriers for patrons. Many patrons expressed their desire for these to be added by letter, in-person and at board meetings but Leslie would not entertain re-adding them.

I have heard her mocking concerned patron and allowed staff to disparage one community member via email but then had another staff member sternly spoken to who expressed support for the same community member.

She anticipates customer needs when they align with her agenda, otherwise she doesn't seem to consider the effects of her actions on patrons whose needs are just as important. The only feedback she has listened to has been that which supports her own agenda. Patrons who have complained have been written off as being crazy or extreme. Concerns of homeschooling parents have been belittled. When a poet laureate in our community spoke out about recent changes to the library there was never any consideration of his point of view. Instead, there was an immediate move to demonize him and elevate a different patron's opinion that suited her better.

She continues to fill in, when needed, at the front desk. She is quick and efficient to provide direction and answers for patrons. She consistently gives tactful feedback and suggestions. She is a wonderful role model for the library. Other staff are used to having the privilege of gatekeeping knowledge and denying access to some, based on personal bias and bigotry.



[SKIP TO THEMES](#)



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

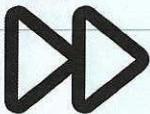
Ms. Tabor should have, but did not, anticipate the severe backlash to the drastic weeding project. Instead, she encouraged staff to maintain the company line of “weeding needed to take place in order to complete the RFID project,” “books are being donated to the Friends,” and “books are being recycled.” In short, staff were encouraged to gaslight community members into thinking that everything was proceeding normally when in fact: we did not need to weed as many books as we did; not all books that were weeded were in bad condition; we weeded way more books than the Friends could accept; books ended up in the landfill as they are not actually recyclable. This is particularly true for the adult fiction sections. When communicating to staff about negative customer feedback, there is a distinct feeling that she does not like or respect the Tompkins County community, especially Ithaca. This feeling has trickled down to favored staff who say things like they “wish people [patrons] would shut up.” It is not clear to me how Ms. Tabor is responding to customer feedback but her depiction of the customer is not positive at all, which leads to an insidious decay of the service philosophy. Fortunately for Ms. Tabor we are all professionals and will continue to give the best customer service we have always given, before she arrived.

Some decisions Ms. Tabor has made increase barriers to giving excellent customer service instead of removing them—for example, she announced via email that she removed the public phone in the lobby (February 9, 2023), telling staff to just “let them [patrons] know it’s been removed.” This was a free service we provided as a way to bridge the digital divide in the absence of pay phones. There was no need to remove it and if Ms. Tabor had consulted staff ahead of time and listened to their concerns, she would hopefully have made a different decision.

The only feedback she responds to is any that are for her changes.

Brutally honest feedbacks that challenge changes are pushed aside and/or laughed at

There used to be a place to leave comments near the front desk. It was removed. I told staff about issues I had but they didn't get resolved. I tried numerous ways to get my feedback heard, but was thwarted. It makes me feel as if my feedback doesn't matter and that, even if I could get through to someone, they very well might not care about what I have to say. TCPL continues to make changes that go against much of what their mission and vision claims. I fear for myself as a part of the community who lives, works and grows in and around Ithaca; that soon TCPL will become a rock that sits inert.



[SKIP TO THEMES](#)



## PART 3

### Focuses on the Customer

#### Comments

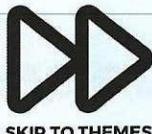
There's been a lot of pushback lately from the public about the big weeding project we did this year. A lot of that is due to misinformation, but I feel like we could have avoided a lot of it if there had been more time to communicate with the public during the process. It feels like she wants to get everything done as soon as possible all the time, which I think contributed here.

Wants to serve the public in an appropriate manner, where they are, not where one might wish they were. Respectful and personable.

When I spoke with Leslie after the change in the hold pick-ups system, she listed some sound bites and word tracks about the change, but I didn't feel that she was responding to me as a person. In the end, I have adjusted to the change and it IS more efficient and even fun to go find my own holds, but the exchange with Leslie left me feeling that my initial concerns were not important and that bullet points were all she had for me. It was not a conversation, but an open and shut. I wonder would it would be like to engage with her as an employee. From the interaction I had with her, I was not encouraged.

I heard, second-hand, that Leslie suggested to a patron that kids in the children's room use noise-cancelling headphones if they require more quiet when others are gaming at the screen/switch. I hope this is a rumor, but if it isn't, it was a wholly disrespectful miscalculation in what children need from that space. As a patron with a kid that still uses that room by preference, and has regrettably opted to leave the graphic novel area due to the gaming screen, I find the decision to prioritize screen-based games over other opportunities extremely misguided.

I have also observed a Children's Room library staff member having to repeatedly attend to children at the screen due to their loud cussing while playing a game. That was a first-hand experience and completely discouraging. We do not need gaming in the children's room. I cannot be convinced of that one. My needs are not being met there.



SKIP TO THEMES

# Focuses on the Customer - Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis



## Lack of Responsiveness to Feedback

- Feedback suggests that Leslie Tabor did not take some customers' feedback about weeding well and did not respond to it constructively.
- She removed the suggestions box and did not welcome much feedback.
- Some library personnel are afraid to speak out about things they think need to be changed, and Leslie Tabor does not seem responsive to their concerns.

## Perception of Ms. Tabor's Attitude

- Some comments suggest that Leslie Tabor may not be open to opinions contrary to her own.
- There are mentions of her being defensive in response to negative feedback.
- The perception that she views the public as the enemy is mentioned.
- It's noted that she refers to library patrons as "customers," which some find problematic.

## Communication & Public Relations

- Several comments highlight the importance of communication and public relations.
- The absence of a dedicated communications professional is seen as a deficit in TCPL's strategies.
- Suggestions for better communication with the public are mentioned.

## Customer Service

- Some feedback highlights positive aspects of Leslie Tabor's approach to customer service.
- There are mentions of her emphasis on customer service and her willingness to engage with patrons.
- Examples of her responding to inquiries and working with various library departments are noted.

## Noise & Library Environment

- Feedback mentions concerns about noise levels in the library, including loud employee conversations.
- Previous disturbances and the presence of police officers in the library are also mentioned.
- Changes in the library environment, such as the removal of displays and books, are mentioned.

## Changes in Library Services and Resources

- Concerns are raised about the reduction of library services, programming, and resources.
- The impact of changes on patrons, such as the removal of books and displays, is discussed.

## Anticipation of Customer Needs

- Some feedback suggests that Leslie Tabor anticipates customer needs when it aligns with her agenda but may not consider other patrons' needs.
- Concerns are raised about her handling of the weeding project and responses to community concerns.

## Handling of Negative Feedback

- Feedback suggests that Leslie Tabor handles negative feedback defensively and may dismiss concerns.
- There are mentions of staff being instructed not to offer programs beyond the basics during certain periods.

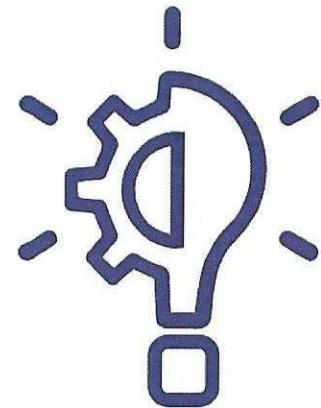
## Barriers to Access

- Some comments express concerns about barriers to access created by certain decisions.
- Examples include the removal of a public phone in the lobby and changes to services like curbside service and book displays.

## Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

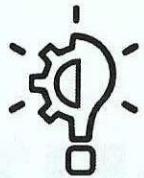
- Leslie Tabor's views on video games and their impact on DEI are mentioned.
- Some concerns are raised about the perception that video games may widen the achievement gap.





## Part 4: **Challenges the Process**

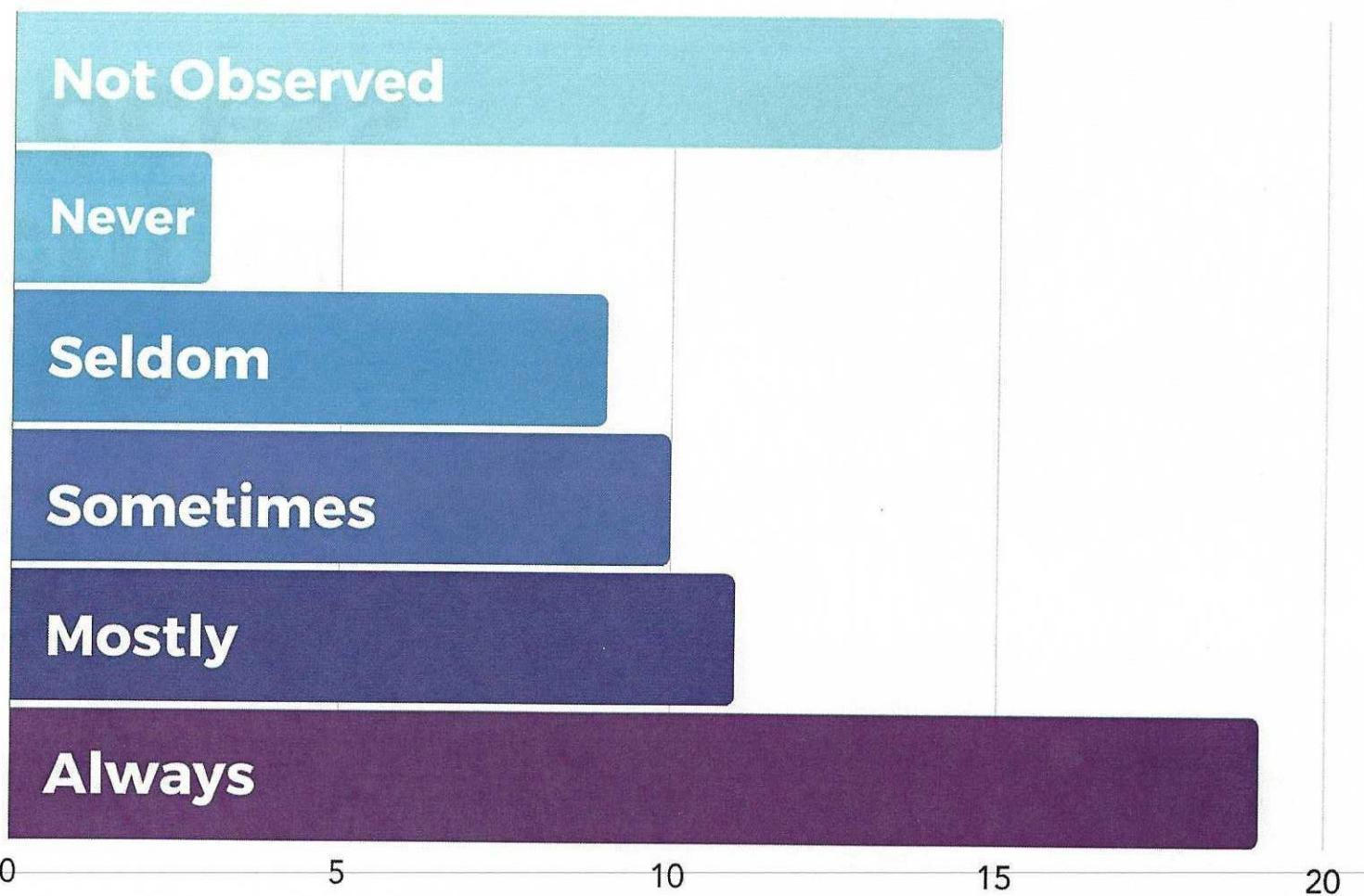


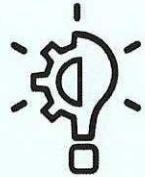


## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

4.1  
Pursues Better Ways to  
Get Things Done

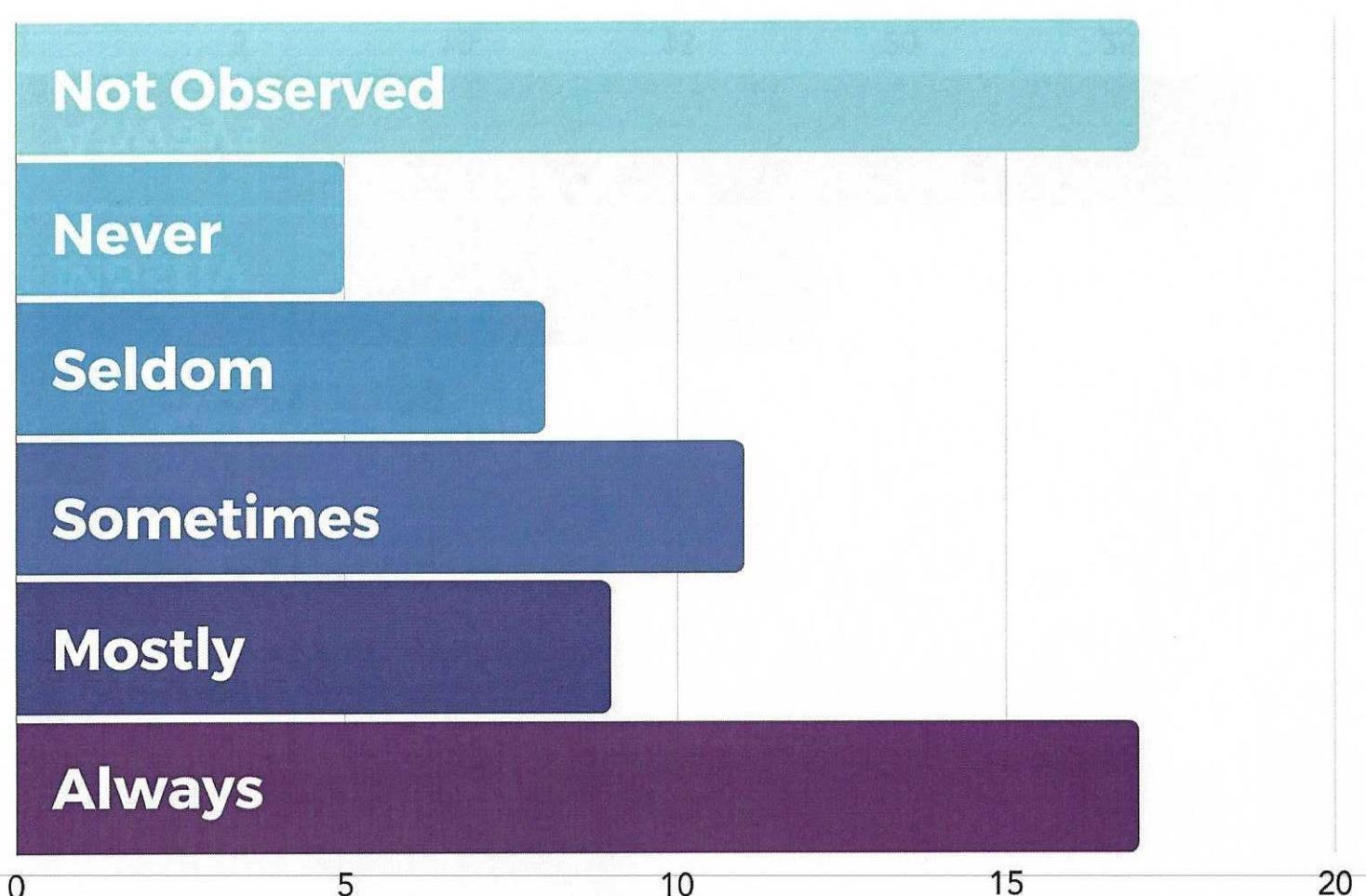


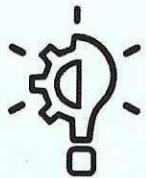


## PART 4

Challenges the  
Process

4.2  
Models Breakthrough  
Thinking



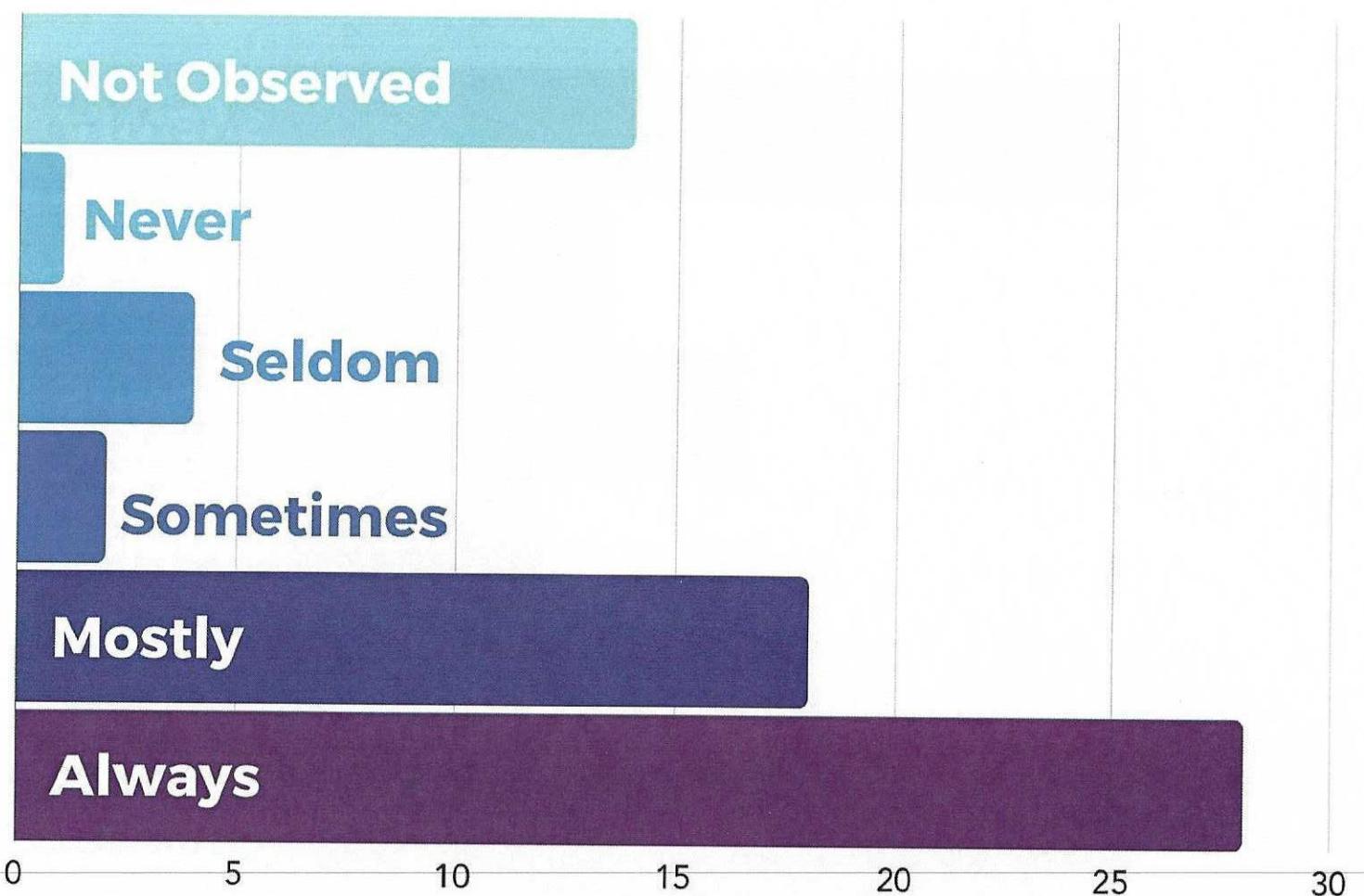


## PART 4

*Challenges the  
Process*

4.3

Acts as a Change Agent

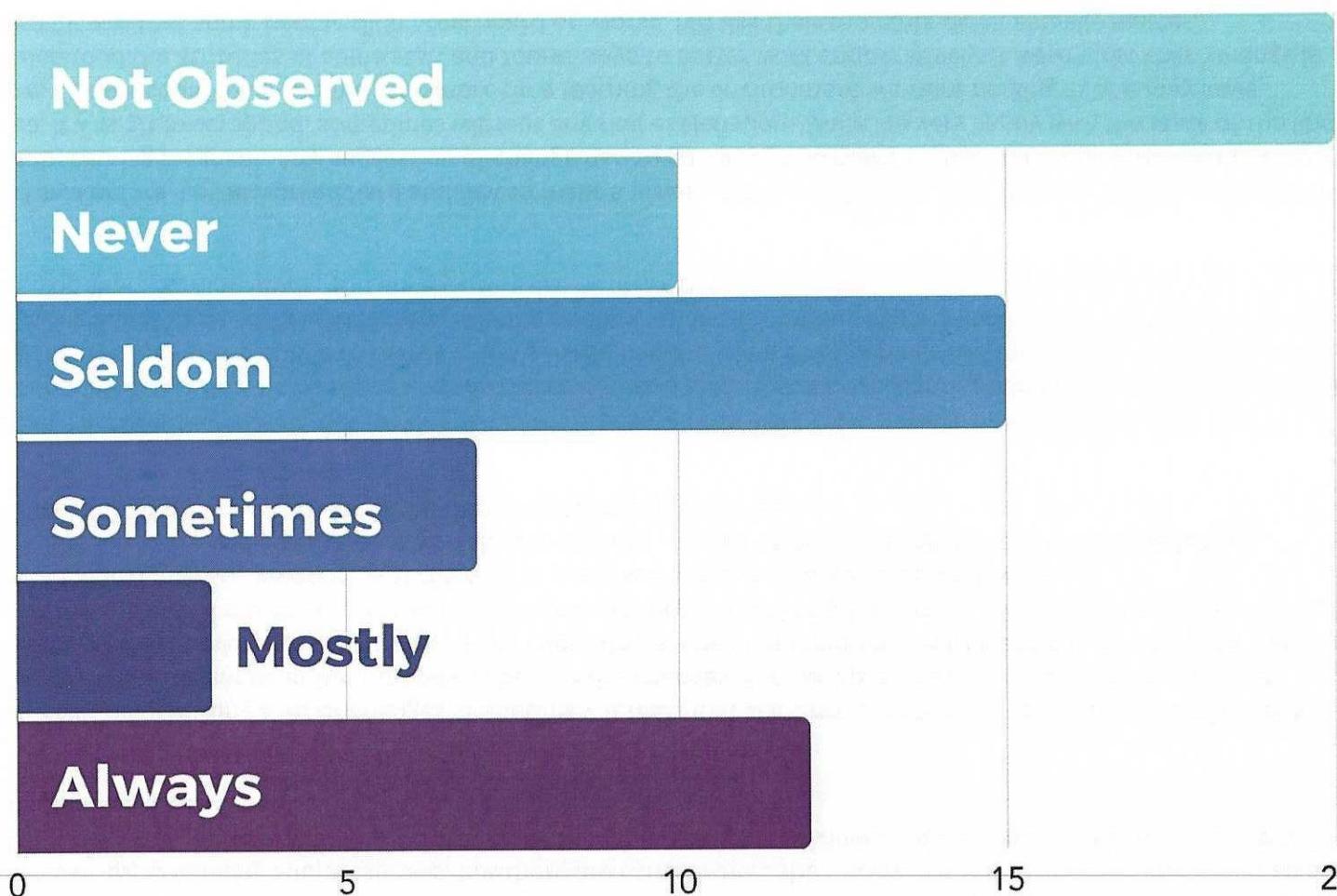




## PART 4

Challenges the  
Process

4.4  
Helps Others Manage  
Through Change



0

5

10

15

20





## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

4.1-4.3 CHANGEis not necessarily for the better. Changes made in past year have been detrimental in my opinion. Library patron since 80's; find fewer materials of value than ever before. The saying, "an inch deep and a mile wide" seems to apply in many subjects/areas, but there are others where the opposite is true "mile deep and less than an inch wide" when it comes to more controversial or highly opinionated viewpoints. E.g. young people and gender identity; racial justice; etc.

4.3: She's been making a lot of changes. Sometimes, it feels that she's making changes just for the sake of making changes. It's not clear what her rationale is behind the changes. For example, she never made it clear why staff members have to take turns to do storytimes even though one staff member is willing and capable of doing them very well. The automatic old closing announcement sounds very professional and timely. Why does it have to be changed to live announcement by whoever is at the desk? I don't see how this change helps the library.

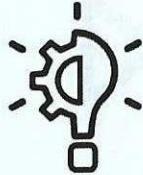
4.4: She did invite someone to do a workshop on how to manage through change, but because of the lack of explanation of the rationale behind all the changes, it is not helpful.

Again, I'm repeating myself, but looking at TCPL's processes and workflows through new eyes has been groundbreaking. Leslie has noticed and worked to improve areas we've been wanting to change for a long time. It will take some time for the public to realize it and see the benefit, but it's happening. Just the changes to workflow that are allowing books to be reshelfed faster, reducing or eliminating the number of carts lined up waiting to be shelved is nothing short of miraculous, and library users are noticing this.

As I said before, Leslie worked hard and fast to make a vision come to reality for TCPL. It's easy to see now that TCPL was becoming stagnant. Any suggestion of change had to go through so many hands, and if someone didn't like an idea, it was often scrapped, sometimes without any real explanation. While I'm very happy with the state of the library now, if Leslie could have spent a little more time learning the environment we were working in, she may have understood the attitudes of some staff and found ways to better work cooperatively. It wasn't just that "change is hard;" it was that some people didn't feel heard or, worse, felt like their thoughts didn't actually matter.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

Another Library Director in Tompkins County told me how Tabor would brag at meetings that people were going to be forced to "drink from the fire hose" and thus laughed at the distress and discomfort people were feeling. So, yes, Tabor prides herself on being a change agent; however, change for the sake of change is necessarily the best way to run any organization. She is more of a "Stress Agent" actually. and not helpful to change management.

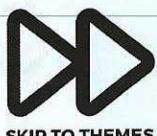
For example, due to the dismantling of TCPL's book repair process, some books are no longer physically available at this Library. Patrons cannot expect nor will they find a lot of what they want/need here.

She doesn't pursue better ways to get things done. Her ways have been environmentally toxic and wasteful. For example, at first, thousands of books culled from the collection were sent to the Friends of the Library Book Sale until the Book Sale said they couldn't accept any more this year. Then the books went in the Recycling Bin, but, due to community distress over the sheer number of books tossed in the dumpster, staff were instructed to bag books - even those in excellent condition - in heavy duty black construction bags to be tossed/hidden in the dumpsters so that the public could not see them and thus be upset. Tabor explains the reactions of the community as "misinformed" about the operation of a library and ignorant of collection maintenance processes, which is condescending, and frankly untrue. (Tabor doesn't come to this library with a wealth of experience and, indeed, many staff, patrons and community partners have much more than she does.)

As I've mentioned, Leslie has not been inclined to engage with staff or patron concerns like mine in a positive way.

As said before, there's been a lot of positive change within just over a year.

By selecting not observed I am taking a neutral stance on the question bc I have very little experience with the director. There have just been some changes in the library that I don't enjoy and I imagine the director has been pivotal in the decisions that caused the changes. I feel like the need for some children to be told to wear noise cancelling headphones in the children's area in response to a letter my friend wrote about the Nintendo Switch being a loud new feature of the youth area is ludicrous.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 4

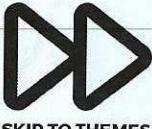
### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

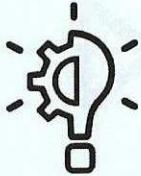
As I've mentioned, Leslie has made many, many changes to the library since becoming our director. I can't speak for the changes in other departments, but in my department there has rarely been a request for input or feedback before a change is announced. For instance, we were told months ago that our collection development process would be changing, and we would soon be rotating collections every 6 months. When I asked how that would work exactly and how we would familiarize ourselves with each new section in such a short amount of time, I wasn't really given an answer. More recently, we've been given the opportunity to determine what this new process will actually look like ourselves (for one, the rotations would happen after at least 1 year not 6 months), but for a long time I was under the impression that the decisions had already been made without us because it wasn't made clear from the beginning.

As another example of her approach, Leslie sent an email to staff in April 2023 that said: "I've been given feedback that things feel very fast right now and I am thankful for those who have shared that with me. I appreciate all direct feedback you would like to share so we can talk through things together. Trust takes time to build, and there has been a lot of distrust in the past between staff, administration, and the board. The only way to heal from that is to move forward and release our burdens. I know it will take time for me to show you that I have the Library's best interest at heart – and therefore your best interest at heart – and am not out to get anyone/get rid of job classes/or anything else that people may be worried about. We will take things one day at a time." Which sounds all well and good, but simultaneously acknowledges that there hadn't been time for there to be trust built between herself and the staff while also insinuating that our concerns would be solved if we just let go of the past and wait for her to prove herself while she carried on exactly as she was already doing. It felt very dismissive and really rubbed me the wrong way, even that early on when I didn't know her very well yet.

Change for change's sake is not helpful for creating public and professional buy in from staff. Years of expertise and passion have been overlooked and honestly decimated, in favor of discouraging ownership of work and tasks. It's easier for her to push through the volume of changes she desires if no one has any attachment or passionate interest in their work. The turnover and planned retirements in the past year should be considered, is it really positive change if a substantial level of staff are leaving despite their longevity. Compliant and approving staff treated more favorably, those that speak up are treated poorly and ways are found to discipline them or make them feel less than.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

Change has been constant during Leslie's time at TCPL thus far. Her focus on progress and adaptability is important for library workers to embrace, even if her methods for implementing change can come off impulsive, or almost with a sense of disregard. "This is the way we are doing this moving forward, and that's just the way it is."

Change is difficult for an organization that has been such a community stalwart. Leslie has championed change - finding better ways to accomplish the library's mission.

Definitely is an agent of change with great focus on totally changing and rebuilding everything in the way she thinks it should be done in a very corporate way. Seldom asks questions or investigates existing processes and exhibits disrespect to staff if they ask questions or try to bring up valid concerns. Besides stating that change is hard, her answer is to accept the Director's decision or find another job.

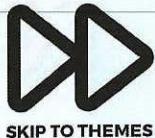
From what I have observed (though a limited amount) Leslie is always working to get things done in the most efficient way possible. She is pursuing changes that she thinks will improve the library. I don't know what breakthrough thinking means. I have not observed her management style while helping staff work through change, though I have heard anecdotally that some staff have been unhappy with the pace of the changes.

Her changes are not bold. They are simply following the worst trends of the day.

I don't have any experience with her on any of these. I will say that her behavior has caused many TCPL employees to quit and Groton Public Library has benefited by hiring one.

Leslie seems to want to act alone and knows everything in all topics.

While many of the changes Leslie has spearheaded have been positive, she tends to implement change with little regard for staff/community feedback first.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

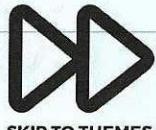
I see that there have been a lot of changes at the library, however I question and I encourage you to question if all change is inherently good. What are the goals? Is it cost effective, balance sheet, economics the best? Is an institution that provides meaningful places of employment and a cornerstone of community with more benefits than fit on a spreadsheet worthy? I understand that growth and change are inherent to being alive and to a thriving organization. Again, with the lack of transparency I emphasize the importance of better communication and dialogue with the public. With all of the changes I do not feel that the Library Director has helped the public through the change.

I think you already know that Leslie is not afraid of change and encourages us to get out of our comfort zones and try things. She does a great job helping others through change -- I think she bends over backwards to talk through feelings. Which, may be hard for some to believe, but I think people just forget this is a job and they need to move on eventually/get used to hearing "No" once in a while, etc. Libraries need to be ever-evolving to reflect and support their communities, and Leslie embraces that.

If "better" means harming people, places and resources in an effort to strive to make TCPL into Leslie's vision. However, I think breakthrough thinking, acting as a change agent and helping others is done with more consideration for the individual, the overall and the future of TCPL. Leslie is short sighted and can't see the forest for the trees. She often couches her vision in humor (sugar) to make it go down easier. But it's still bitter. When she is no longer the director the community that lives and grows in Ithaca will be left to pick up the pieces.

As for helping others manage change, she tends to be of the "it's my way or the highway" version of "helping." That mindset is no help at all. It's harmful and leaves lasting damage.

If there was one word that defined Leslie's time at TCPL it would be change. I believe a good majority of the changes have been for the best, The execution and change management on the other hand has been poor. Changes come quick and without much explanation. I feel most of the times a decision is made, and the staff will not know why until much later. This creates a very rough work environment especially after working through the pandemic and all its changes. It would be nice if Leslie would slow down and let the staff acclimate to changes.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

In my department, I see her do some things that are not in her purview, and so when she makes changes she doesn't really know what she's doing. She can't wait to make something the way she wants it, and doesn't get a full understanding of how things have worked in the past and why they have evolved to the way they are now.

In my six months working with Leslie, I have seen many changes and am aware of other changes that have happened in the library. From my point of view, many of these changes, such as improving sightlines in the children's room to ensuring scheduling is more equitable across departments, have a net positive. Sometimes these changes have been difficult to get staff on board, but she is working hard to make sure that changes are in concert with the union contract and leadership.

It's hard to initiate and encourage change, and help others manage through it when there is a great deal of resistance. Leslie has always made it known that she understands these difficulties and is supportive of us. However, in practice she has prioritized putting these changes into action over our individual feelings.

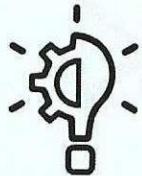
Leslie definitely acts as an agent of change! LOL! Just ask staff. Insert snarky comments from folks. Personally, I love it. This library has held to an archaic way of thinking for too damn long. She is always looking for better and more efficient ways to get stuff done, making life for staff easier.

Leslie does try ways to make things better but doesn't then ask for feedback and evaluate whether those efforts made things better. She has made massive changes to our organizational structure, scheduling, work duties, and staffing but with little or no preparation for the staff and without a clear plan.

Leslie has drastically changed staff members jobs without telling them about it. She sends mass emails to alert people of the changes without helping staff members to manage through the change in a positive way. This is one of the methods she uses to terrorize staff into quitting. The changes she has implemented have not been popular with the community or patrons. She ignores their feedback.



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## PART 4 Challenges the Process

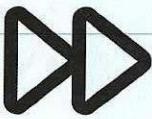
### Comments

Leslie believes she is a good communicator and that it is one of her strengths. Yet I wish that she would have pursued better ways to communicate about the weeding at TCPL. The explanation of why TCPL has weeded over 40% of their collection has ranged from preparing for the RFID project, that weeding is a normal part of collection development (which is absolutely correct), that past directors haven't encouraged reading (absolutely not correct), that it's harmful to have old books on the shelves and that weeding just hasn't been done because of Covid, etc. There's a little bit of truth in some of these, but it still doesn't account for how much has been weeded. TCPL is the Central Library and has the responsibility of having a larger collection to help supplement the smaller library collections. Parts of series in science fiction, mysteries, and fiction have been disrupted by the weeding, making it difficult for library patrons to read series in the past year. The annual collection budget of TCPL is in the range of \$250,000 - \$300,000 typically. There is no possible way with those budget figures that the weeded materials could be financially replaced without taking years or extra funding. Is this good stewardship of library donations and Friends money?

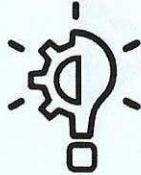
Was the library board of trustees looking for a change agent when hiring Leslie? That wasn't communicated to the search committee, yet it seems to be behind the scenes what they were looking for. Were they looking for a director to get rid of two long standing department heads? That seems to be the case. If that was communicated by the Board to Leslie, then she's a change agent. If that wasn't communicated to her, then I would hope the board would question her actions, which doesn't seem to happen.

Leslie has left us with the impression that she doesn't make changes because they're in some way better; it seems she only cares about changing things to prove that she has the power to do so. Especially in the early months, she pushed through an enormous number of changes without taking time to consider what was already in place, what was working and what not, and the legitimate concerns of staff. These were extremely painful months as she steamrolled over staff concerns and the principles of librarianship and community service we had always held to.

Leslie is an agent of change that has brought positive new workflows to TCPL. I feel that other people - staff and community - are actually starting to see the big picture of these changes, thanks to Leslie learning to adapt and grow her skills in communication to help both staff and patrons to understand.



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## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

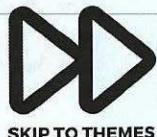
Leslie is definitely challenging the staff to change the way processes take place, but I do not agree that the level of change is necessary. She speaks about the library as if it was doing nothing before she arrived, which is untrue. She made sweeping changes right after being hired, before getting to know the community or library. The library has been groundbreaking and capable, even during Covid and without a permanent leader. The staff have been dedicated and creative, publishing in national publications, speaking at conferences, and creating new offerings from the ground up. Leslie speaks about and behaves as if she hates the library as it was and thinks it needs a total overhaul. She thinks that the professional staff are overpaid and that the benefits we receive are excessive, and makes this belief obvious. This creates low morale and makes staff feel unvalued and disliked, fearful of punitive punishment.

Leslie is overseeing so much change that I can only believe that she is certainly pursuing what she perceives as "better." As a patron, I am mostly seeing the results of the process, not the process itself.

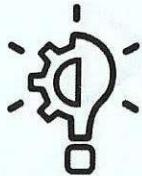
Culling the vast # of books from the collection this year does not feel better - I have missed titles that I have enjoyed borrowing in the past and I am now required to request many books "sight unseen" through interlibrary loan because TCPL does not hold them (anymore). It seems this project could have been carried out more thoughtfully - it happened so fast that it feels sloppy.

Leslie is very interested in creating changes to better serve our public. She has instituted a variety of changes to the library her first year, which have generally resulted in better customer service. Staff have struggled at times to adjust to the new rate of change, as traditionally changes have been very slow at TCPL. Spending more time initially to bring staff along might ultimately result in better outcomes, though in some cases certain staff were intentionally change resistant.

Leslie takes the challenge of making the TCPL a center of Ithaca's community seriously. Coming into the position after 5 years of not having a director (and COVID, let's not forget COVID) was daunting and Leslie met the challenge head on to get TCPL back on track. There were a lot of decisions to be made, agendas to revisit, staff to interact with, and plans to implement. Leslie took it on, the library is lucky to have her.



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## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

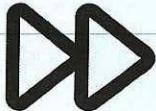
Looks at community-wide issues with fresh eyes and makes recommendations for change. She brings positive energy and a collaborative leadership style to conversations with peers.

Ms. Tabor has challenged many processes here at TCPL, and in truth some things are improving. However, the WAY she goes about challenging and changing is highly stressful for staff. Many processes have changed in circulation, for instance, holds are self-service, Library of Things items are available at the reference desk, and patrons can check in and out and apply for library cards at any service desk. None of these changes were well planned or communicated to staff, and in fact, all of the changes increased the workloads for reference desk staff. Another example is that Ms. Tabor instituted a six-month collection development cycle, where staff would change their collection focus every six months. This is a wildly ineffective method whereby no one is getting enough practice in any one collection before having to switch to a new one. The method seems to be concocted to set staff up to fail and to be constantly stressed. After some pushback by department heads, Ms. Tabor allowed for a 1 year cycle, but most professional staff agree that 2 or even 3 years is more appropriate.

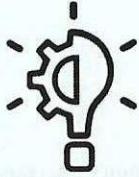
Again, if staff ask questions, or challenge decisions, they are “reactionary” or “paranoid.”

One example that I can use for this is Leslie's reworking of the circulation department's processes and workflows, which resulted in the elimination of our shelving cart backlog. In no other library that I have been in, either as a patron or a staff member, have I experienced such a large backlog of books waiting to be shelved. These carts weren't in any kind of order, making it extremely difficult to find books on them for our patrons. By addressing this specific workflow, books are being shelved in a much timelier manner, making it easier for patrons and library staff to find the titles they are looking for. Making our patrons' needs a priority is another example of great customer service.

She is a wizard in efficiency and expediency. Things that took months, years, or decades to accomplish; now take hours, days, or weeks. She briefs us on upcoming changes, and always allows input and critiques. She always encourages us to go to our supervisors or come to her when we feel uneasy or have concerns. Other staff choose to gossip and spread misinformation.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 4

### Challenges the Process

#### Comments

She's been unafraid of change and had the clarity of a newcomer to see what needed to be changed right away. Has not been easy and it has been difficult to get some on board. Leslie does what she can to explain and encourage but some staff are not open to it and I'm not sure there's much else she can do to reach the sticky wickets.

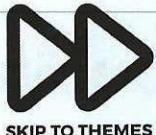
There is constant challenge of the process, often without knowing what the process is or trying to understand why. This has created an atmosphere that is exhausting. Having to explain what precedent has been and why is exhausting, especially it is always dismissed. There is constant change. Change for the sake of change sometimes. Helping others manage through change is not happening. The best we get is an acknowledgment that "change is hard".

There is no question to me that Leslie is an active and enthusiastic proponent of change. We hear about this all the time. My perception- again based on comments from her and [REDACTED] is that she is also very supportive of bringing her staff along with her. But change is hard and I understand that not everyone will perceive her efforts the same way. The librarians I have interacted with, are clearly thrilled and very supportive.

This is an area where Leslie excels. She can see many old processes that are no longer working for us - or never did. Many of the changes that have been made are so great for TCPL and have been a long time coming. She's very observant and can see many of the things that have been dragging the library down for a long time. There is no question that she is an agent of change.

Where she could use improvement is in the change management. I don't get the feeling she has a lot of patience in this area. Most humans require time and some amount of grief processing to go through large or constant change. It's pretty natural to have challenges in this area. I would love to see Leslie take a step back and validate both staff and community emotional experiences as they learn to accept the change. I know it can be fatiguing to make space for that but I think much of the resistance and friction that's happening is because both staff and patrons are going through a typical psychological experience but it is not being treated as such. Instead, there is the feeling that anyone who can't handle the change is just old or backwards or useless, which compounds the challenge.

Yes, a true visionary. However, others may need a bit more structure and guidance to get to that vision.



SKIP TO THEMES

# Challenging the Process - Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis



## Mixed Perceptions of Change

Some individuals believe that the changes implemented in the past year have been detrimental, leading to concerns about the library's direction.

Others acknowledge that change is necessary but feel that it has been introduced too rapidly without adequate explanation or consideration for the staff and community's needs.

## Perception of Leslie as a Change Agent

Leslie is seen as an agent of change, with a focus on improving processes and adapting the library to new challenges. However, there is a divide in how her changes are perceived, with some considering them positive and others viewing them negatively.

## Lack of Clear Rationale

Many respondents express a need for a clearer understanding of the rationale behind the changes, with some feeling that changes are made without a transparent explanation.

## Impact on Library Operations

Positive feedback about changes related to library workflows, such as faster book reshelfing, is mentioned as a benefit.

Concerns are raised about the impact of changes on book collections and the availability of materials, potentially affecting patrons' ability to find what they need.

## Communication & Change Mgmt

Some respondents mention that there has been a lack of communication or consultation with staff before implementing changes, leading to uncertainty and discomfort. It is noted that Leslie could improve her approach to change management by providing more time for staff and patrons to adapt and addressing emotional aspects of change.

## Concerns About Transparency & Community Impact

Questions are raised about transparency in decision-making and the impact of changes on the community.

Some respondents emphasize the importance of open communication with the public and addressing concerns about the library's direction.

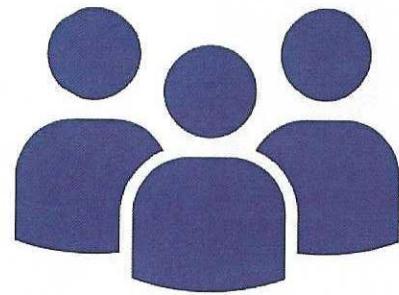
## Staff Morale & Turnover

Concerns are expressed about the impact of changes on staff morale, with references to staff turnover and the need for better support during transitions.

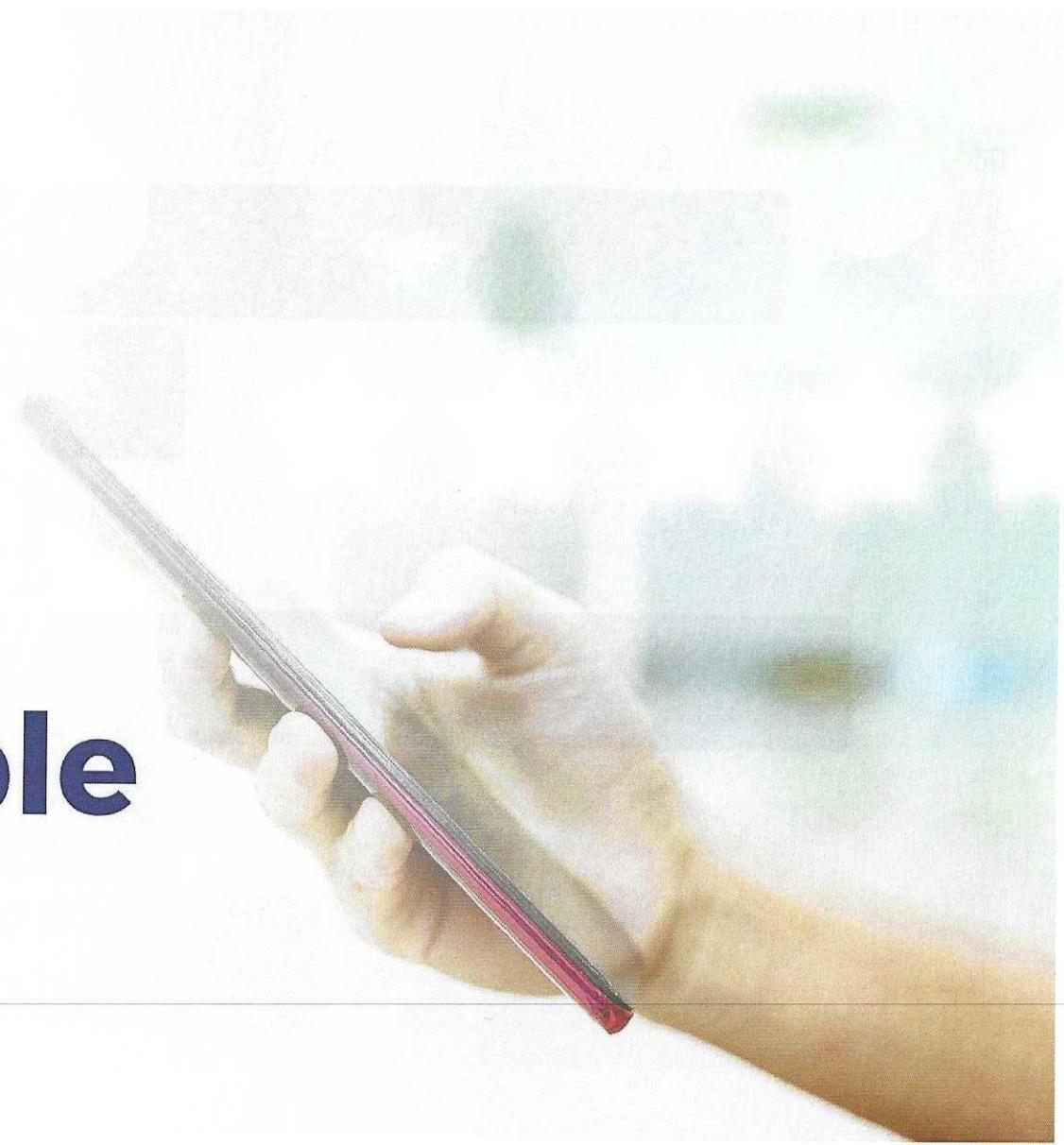
## Desire For a Balanced Approach

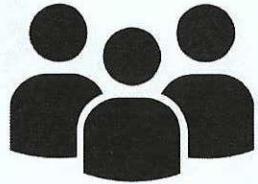
Some respondents express a desire for a balanced approach to change, emphasizing the importance of preserving the positive aspects of the library while making necessary improvements.





## Part 5: Values People



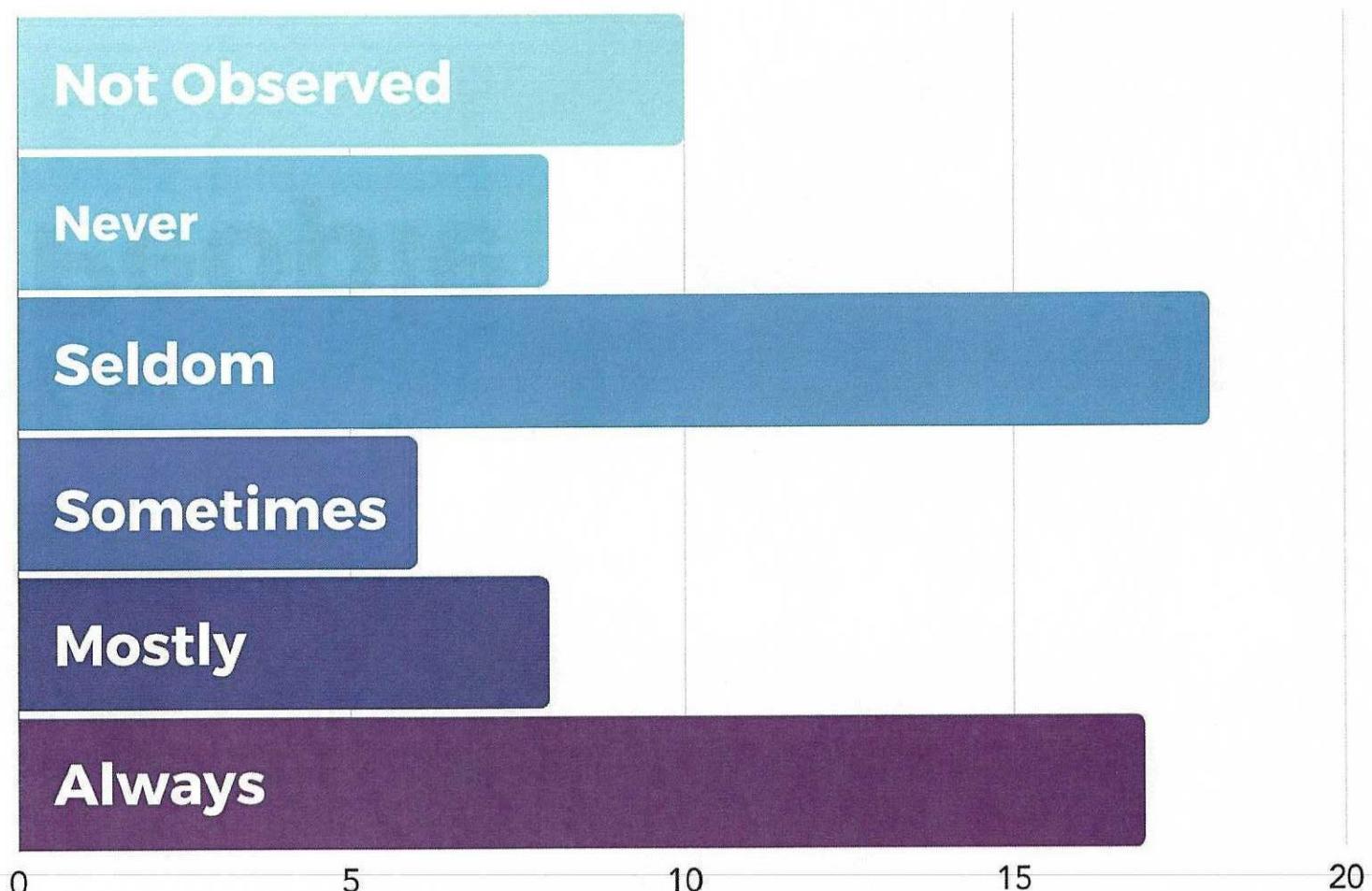


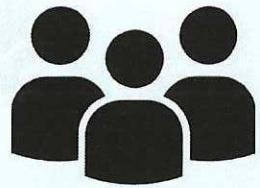
## PART 5

### Values People

5.1

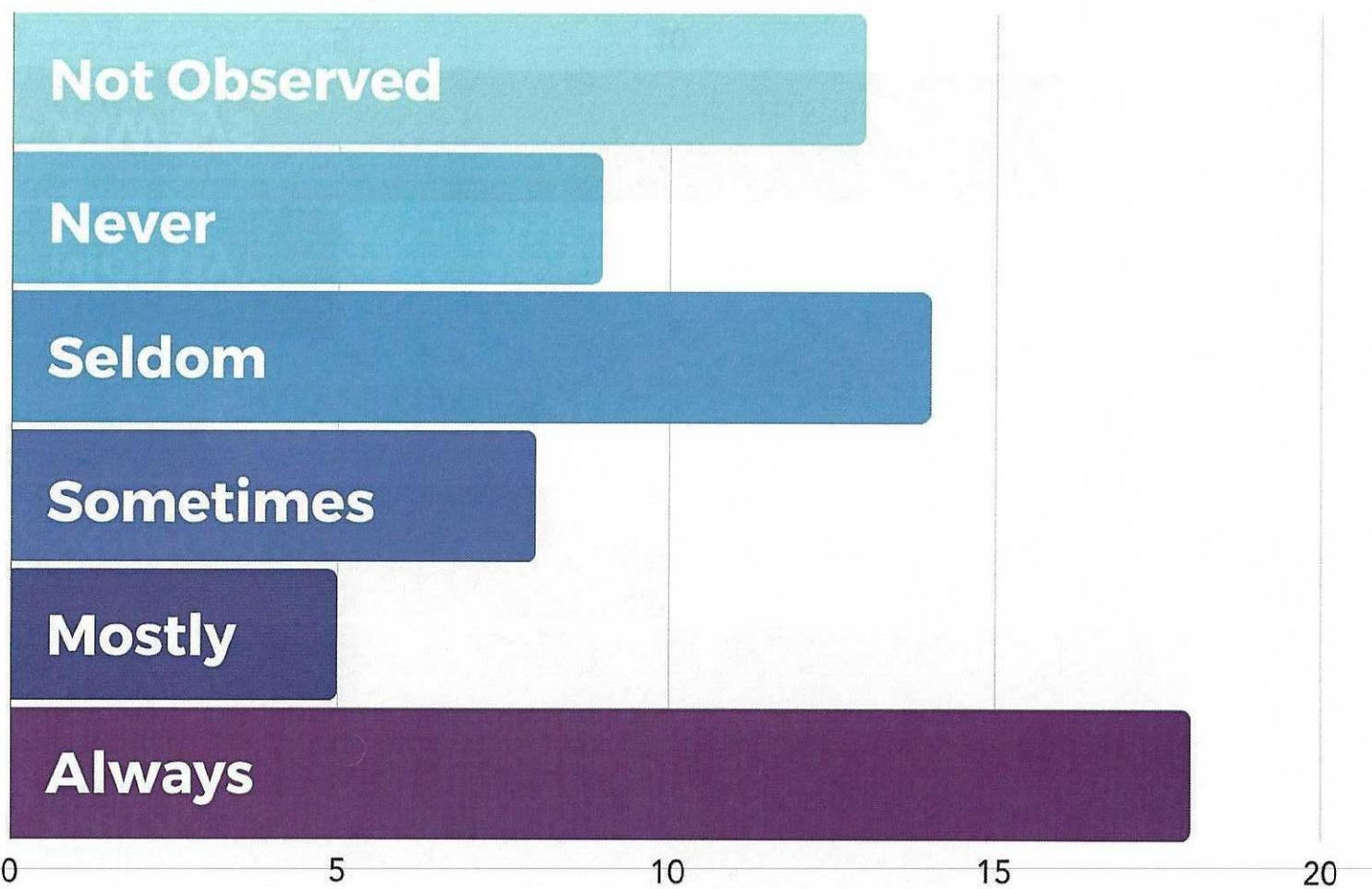
Shows Respect for Others  
and Their Ideas

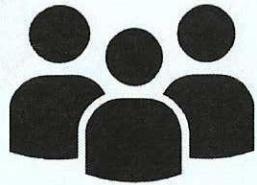




## PART 5 Values People

5.2  
Encourages Others'  
Involvement In Making  
Things Better

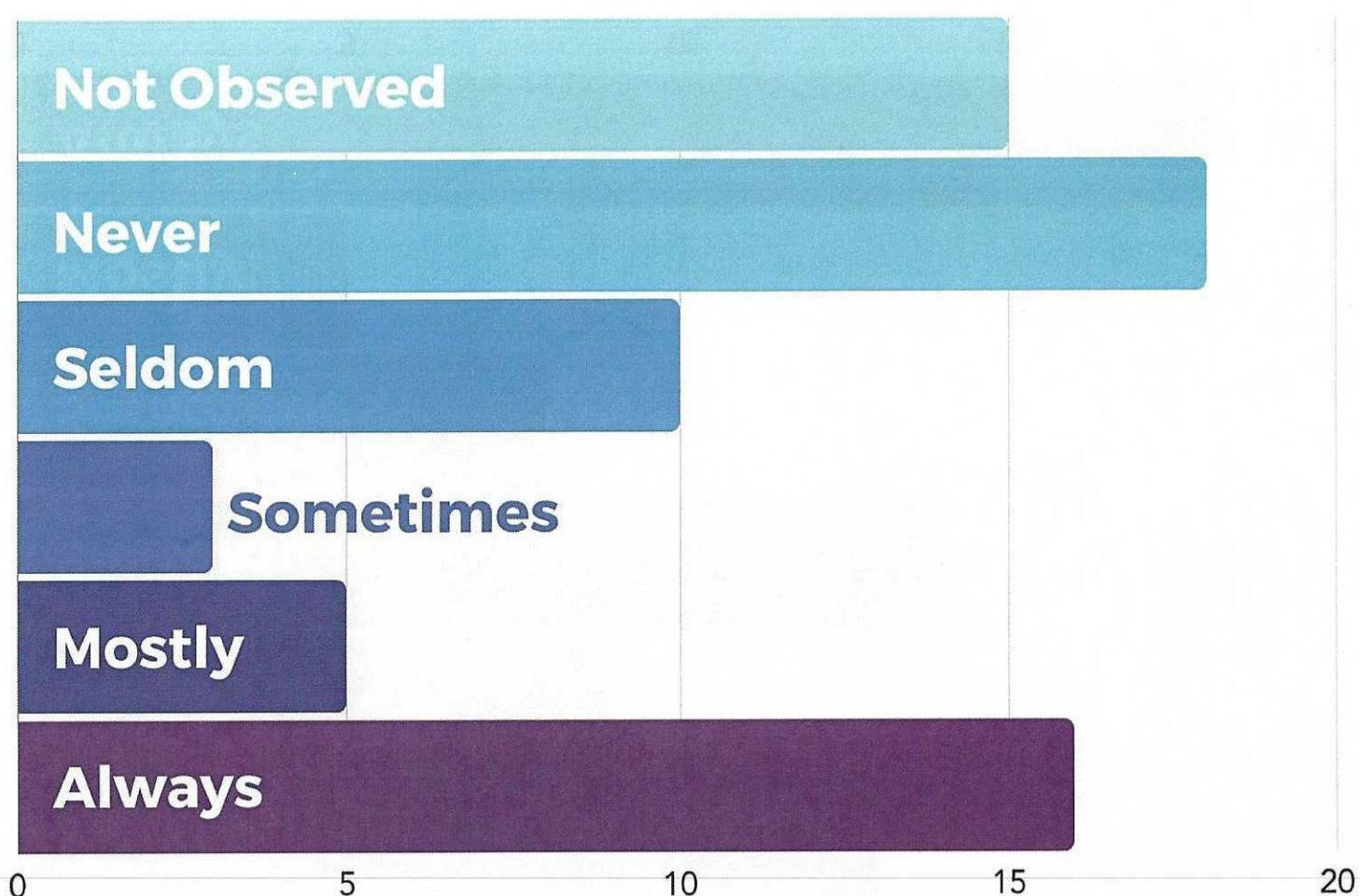


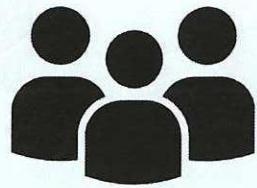


## PART 5

### Values People

5.3  
Appreciates Differences  
Between People In  
Thought and Style

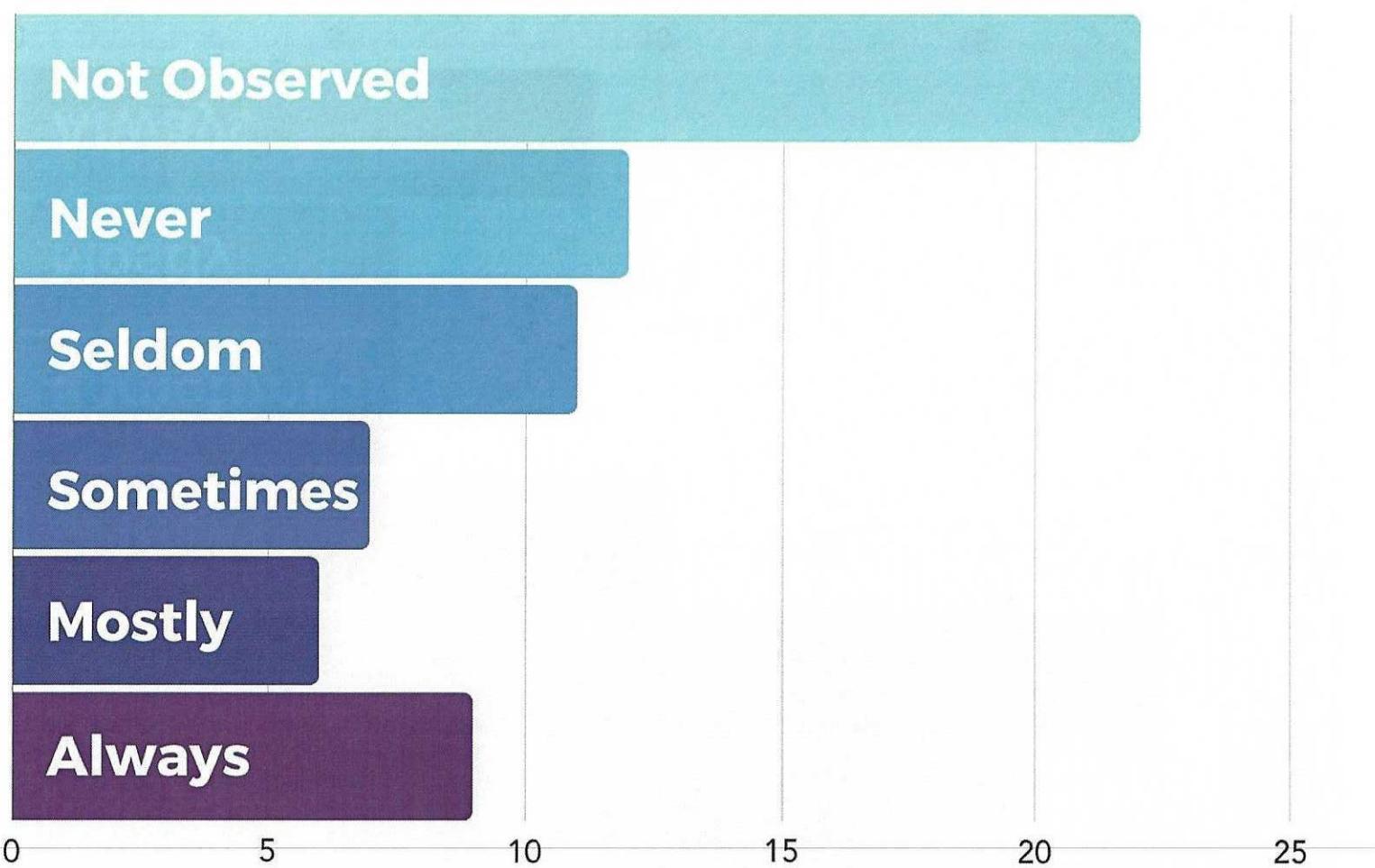


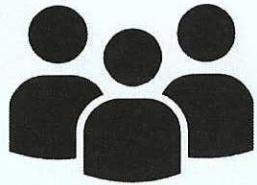


## PART 5 Values People

5.3

Allows for Flexibility in  
How Work is Accomplished

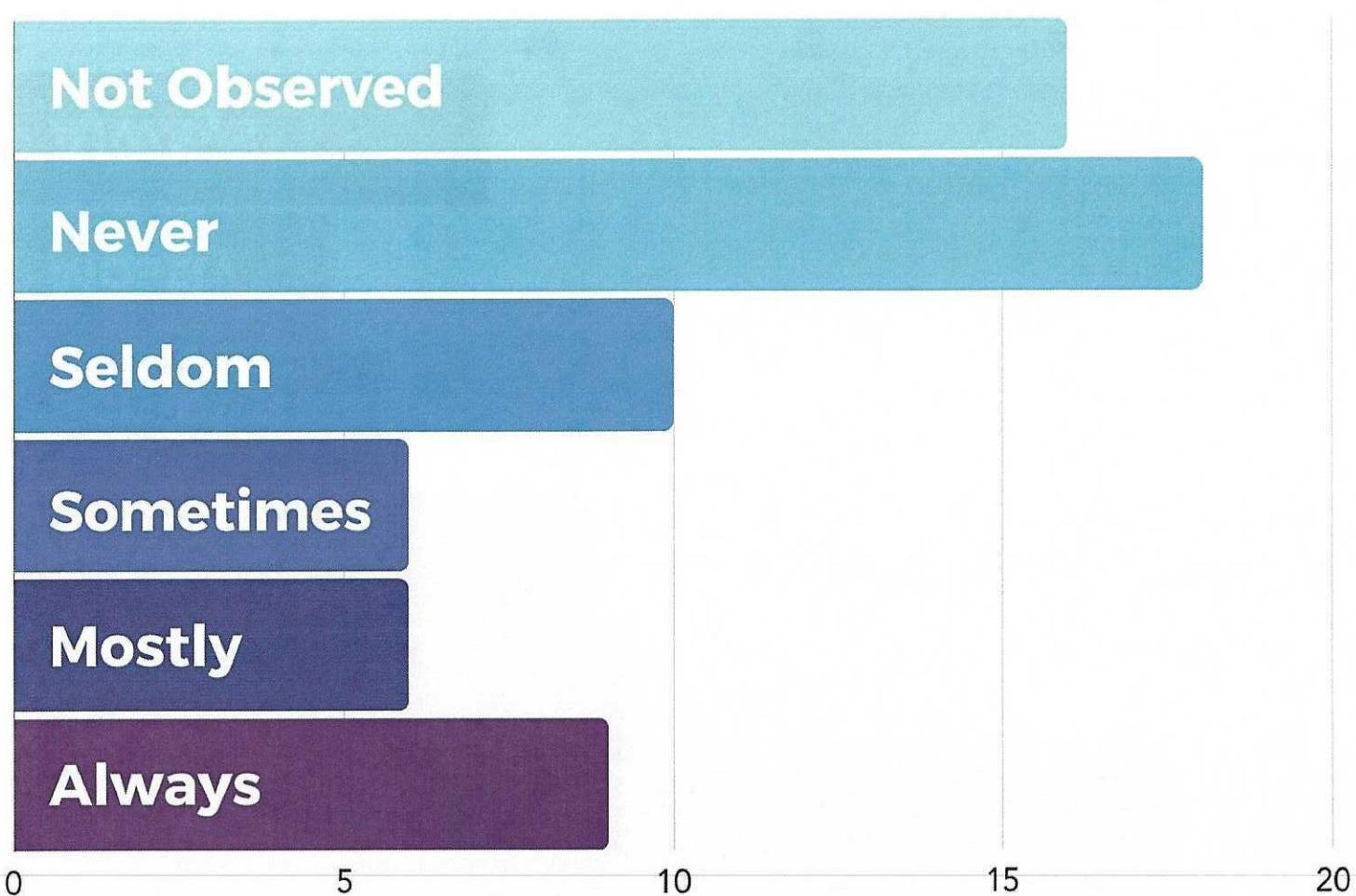


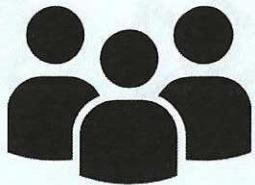


## PART 5

### Values People

5.4  
Considers Others Needs  
When Making Decisions





## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

5.1: Most of the time, people's ideas and suggestions are rejected without much explanation. Only a few staff members whom she likes might be able to find a way to let her hear their ideas.

5.2: There is almost no involvement from others in making many decisions. Staff was told about her decisions, then they were asked to make her decisions work.

5.4 &5 : No flexibility and no consideration when making decisions at all: Some staff members prefer to work on Saturdays whereas for some working fewer Saturdays works better for their families. She asked everyone to rotate working on Saturdays. It doesn't make any sense to force everyone to have the same schedule.

A deep listener who shows respect and care for community partners

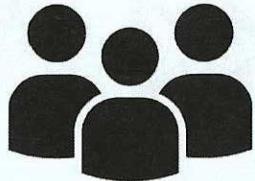
Again, I don't feel that the current Library Director showed any respect for my ideas and I didn't feel that the Director really appreciated interacting with me. It felt so impersonal. I did not feel that the Director was encouraging of me to give any further feedback. I did not feel in my interaction with the Director that there was any appreciation for a different viewpoint. I did not feel there was any understanding from the Director that some patrons, like myself, prefer to interact with the staff at the circulation desk and do not want to look for my reserved items on the shelves. With the many changes to the library, including over 40% reduction in books, the video game large screen in the Youth Services area I believe that some people's needs were considered, but I do not get the sense that there was complex blending of the many and varied needs. In my viewpoint this is a public library and it should be a place where the community, especially the actively using and participating and fundraising members should feel welcomed and especially not alienated.

Does not value people. Conform to her style and work methods or leave. Wants things done in the manner and way that she has dictated. Does not appreciate diversity of thought or opinion. Will often say no to staff she does not like even though their request or suggestion is reasonable.

Leslie is an empathetic and supportive leader and colleague.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

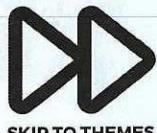
As someone who has a very different personality from Leslie, I've gotten the sense that she prefers people with personalities more similar to herself. She certainly seems to favor some staff over others, and at least some of those staff report to her on what people say and do, a thing that I have both heard about from others and had happen to me when someone Leslie particularly favors egregiously misrepresented an interaction I had with a patron to her. She seems to have a tendency to jump right to attempted disciplinary measures when she hears something, without first investigating whether the situation actually warrants said discipline (in my case, no disciplinary actions were taken once I had the chance to explain what actually happened).

This week also marks the 7th person leaving TCPL since she started here, including all 3 long-term department heads within the first 7 months. Only 1 out of 7 gave two weeks notice; every other time, they've already left the organization by the time we're notified. Staff leaving was highly unusual before she worked here; turnover was incredibly low outside of retirement. So while I'm sure that some people feel very encouraged and supported by her, I've felt deeply uncomfortable around Leslie and select staff members for a while now, and I know I'm not the only one.

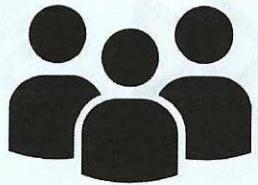
For me, I have not felt valued AT ALL. I've seen her lavish positive attention and encouragement and respect for many, but not all staff. Several staff have come to me to share how unfair her treatment feels (I used to be the Union steward so people felt comfortable doing that) I tried to be positive the first few weeks about the changes she'd made, but it didn't take long to realize she was not supportive of anyone who disagreed with her or had suggestions or concerns or looked for compromise.

I cannot imagine how hard it must be trying to make everyone happy with every decision, but I think Leslie really takes folks concerns into account. She encourages folks to take part on committees and interviews and to generally be more collaborative, whereas it used to be only the Librarians or Department Heads had a say. This is refreshing and gives folks a way to build new skills.

I have touched on some of these items in other areas. Leslie frequently mentions the work of others in her reports. She is quick to pass the credit to those implementing things. She seems extremely inclusive and respectful. I have no experience, again, of reporting to her so comments on work flow are outside my range of experience.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

I am not a TCPL employee and my interactions with the library director have therefore been extremely limited. My response to this part of the evaluation is based on three experiences:

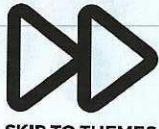
1. I spoke during the public comment period of the November library board meeting, and the director was on her phone throughout the three minutes of my comment. She was also on her phone for much of the rest of the public comment period. As a result I do not feel that either I or my ideas were respected or in fact even heard by the library director.
2. Many library staff members at the December Board Meeting were openly hostile to those in the public who expressed their opinions. These staff members used their three-minute time for comment as a platform from which to denounce the opinions expressed by members of the public, and were answered by loud applause by library staff members when they did so.

I have heard from four members of the public who spoke at that meeting, and they all felt that the meeting was hostile, that staff members seem locked into an "us-versus-them" dynamic, and that dialogue with the library staff or administration is no longer possible. (All of these members of the public were at pains to express their gratitude to the library and its staff during their comments; one in particular had raised over \$2,000 for the library during read-a-thons in the past.)

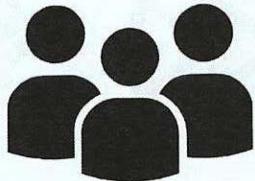
I realize that these are the actions of library staff members, and not of the director. But in light of my experience of the director I think it extremely likely that a hostile attitude toward the public has in fact been promoted--or at least tolerated--by the library director herself.

3. I emailed the library director to express my wish that the library remove the Nintendo Switch screen from the children's reading area. I received an email in response which was cordial but did not, I feel, engage with any of the reasons I gave for my opinion. Other library patrons have shared similar emails with me which they have also received from the library director, and all of them seem to follow a similar pattern of cordial response without engagement.

As a result of the hostility I have received from library staff members for voicing my opinion at two board meetings, I now visit the library less often than before. I feel that I am not entirely welcome there, and find it a stressful place to be.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

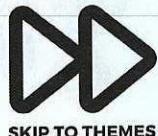
I have never met a manager who does a poorer job at appreciating differences between staff members and utilizing human resources to an organization's advantage. It appears clear that Leslie was given free reign to break down the library and push staff to quit. Leslie shuts down any voice that does not say/do what she wants. She does not consider the needs of others when making decisions to the point of committing ageism, sexism, discrimination, and HIPAA violations.

I think Leslie consistently communicates care for the staff. She has tightened up many workflows that has in many cases led to less flexibility in the short term, but I found this to be appropriate given the extremely lax standards that had previously existed.

I've seen many staff around me able to flourish and come into themselves. There is a feeling of cooperation and ingenuity and friendship. I've noticed much less backstabbing and complaining and a lot more laughing and ideas flowing. I've also had the opportunity to work with more staff on more projects, rather than being strictly divided by rank and department. It's been very satisfying.

It's hard to tell with Leslie if she respects the staff or is just motivating us to accomplish one of her perceived goals/low hanging fruit. With some staff she seems to be invested in and others she keeps at arm's length. It's hard to present an alternate idea to hers without immediately receiving an inappropriate joke or an off comment. I feel she makes narratives and attempts to make the staff believe them instead of addressing their needs.

Leslie is about results and allows people to get work done how they see fit, from what I see. Committee work has been successful in drawing in staff input but since not everyone participates it may seem to some that their voices are not heard. The mechanisms are there but some people seem to resist them out of an unwillingness to change.



SKIP TO THEMES

Once again, these ratings are based on my observations of various employees who feel that they have little or no say (or space to share their opinions) in some of the bigger changes in the library.



## PART 5 Values People

### Comments

It is extremely and painfully clear that Ms. Tabor values some staff members over all others. There is a very clear focus on a few select staff. Those staff members' views are highly prized, so that in meetings they often dominate the discussion, or are given immediate positive feedback by Ms. Tabor, while others are ignored or silenced. In other words, only a very few staff members are shown respect.

Staff members are actively discouraged in making positive moves on behalf of the TCPL staff and community. Again, unless the idea is advanced by a favored staff person.

Ms. Tabor does not appreciate differences in thought or style, and in fact targets staff she deems uncool (for some reason?). Certain staff have been told they don't have the right personality to be promoted, have been told (without concrete examples) that they are "black and white thinkers," have been told they don't give enough "information" about other staff. There seems to be a particular disregard for older staff and in one instance, she said that a staff member "should [effing] retire."

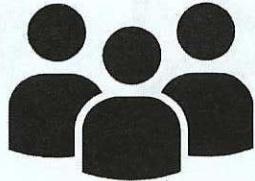
Ms. Tabor does not allow for flexibility in work styles and some people are criticized for not working fast or hard enough (even though the deadline is arbitrary). Some prized staff are allowed to make decisions and changes to their work tasks, while most others are not.

Ms. Tabor does not value TCPL staff as professionals and micromanages on an extreme level; she has taken away long-term staff desks, decreed that staff can no longer eat at their desks (even though this is an extremely common world-wide office practice), has suggested staff wear certain types of shoes on the job, constantly references staff being "in trouble" or that they are "stealing time." Staff have gotten in trouble simply for doing their jobs: in one instance, two staff members were reprimanded after collaborating on a community book fest and were told they were no longer allowed to work on future iterations of the project after an extremely successful result that put the library in partnership with many other literary and cultural organizations and businesses.

Ms. Tabor is inappropriate with staff and often makes unwelcome comments about their appearance (sometimes face to face, sometimes in a public email or Teams message) and creates infantile nicknames and sometimes sexually harassing nicknames like "Handsome \_\_\_\_." She calls women on staff "girl." She has invited staff to attend off-hours events and some staff feel pressured to go even though these events are not work related. She publicly announced the "team spirit award" for one staff member for their "willingness and effort to show up" and attend two off-hours parties even though they were not work-related (Teams message, 7/14). Clearly, the message is: you are in if you participate in social events, and out (and not a team-player) if you do not.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

Leslie definitely opens up the conversation to staff to voice their ideas for change and improvement. She is receptive to many ideas, although it seems that she prefers people come to her with a solid plan all ready to go rather than being available for facilitating the development of plans and ideas.

It is clear that she prefers certain personalities and thought styles. She values outgoing, extroverted, gregarious staff members who can take up a lot of space and come with big ideas. Quieter and slower personalities can be discouraged. It makes sense to appreciate staff members that have "go-getter" personalities and are good at taking initiative and have an internal drive to always do better. But not every member of staff can always be a superstar and it's valuable to have slow, steady, and reliable staff. There's nothing wrong with being perfectly adequate and it can feel like staff that aren't movers and shakers are seen as dead weight.

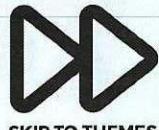
As for flexibility in how work is accomplished - one thing that TCPL used to offer staff was tons of flexibility and most of that has gone away. It's being touted as "equity" but completely misses the idea that equity is about making sure individuals have what they need to be successful, rather than making everyone do everything in the same way.

Leslie frequently greets people with the saying "Hey girl" or something similar. I view this as extremely disrespectful to staff, colleagues or anyone else.

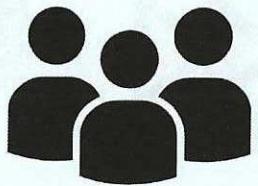
While there seems to be an appearance of considering others' needs when making decisions, such as stating "talk to your supervisor, my door is always open", etc., when staff have questioned Leslie's decisions, they are met with being excluded, being considered not a team player, not having the library's interest at heart, or that they can just move on. People are afraid to say anything that is construed as "anti-Leslie" because there will be retribution. Staff are terrified about filling this review out because they believe somehow that Leslie will find out who wrote something and retaliate. They are also fearful that if they are honest in their feelings and express negativity and that the board does nothing with these results, how can they work in that environment?

Leslie takes management seriously. I do not work in the library, so I do not know how the daily interactions are.

Like mentioned before, "my way or the highway"



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

Leslie often speaks very poorly of how TCPL has been in the past, putting down hiring decisions, saying we've been "out of date" and not a "modern" library, that we are 20-25 years behind on weeding, saying staff were waiting for "clarity of vision from a new director". Numerous times Leslie has written emails that said the "staff need training in...." and the trainings offered are for aspects of our jobs we've been doing for years. Our librarians could be running these trainings rather than feeling demeaned by someone teaching them how to do simple tasks like order books or set up a display. She seems to dismiss or is unaware of the level of skill and expertise on our staff. It's very disheartening.

In terms of encouraging other's involvement, she does invite people to do that but then is involved in most every decision and is on every committee within the library. I have witnessed her taking complete charge of meetings, disregarding the person who is the chair. Past directors have encouraged staff to be chairs and run their own committees, only asking for the chairs to report back to them. Also, department heads do not seem allowed to make the smallest decisions on their own like moving tables or working with staff on schedules.

In terms of flexibility in the way work is done, she continues to put in to place what works for her. Despite the fact the our union contract says staff can work at home for 10% of their hours. Leslie has refused to approve a single staff person doing this. In contradiction, she was going to require that staff work at home while the library was closed for construction. The contradiction was clearly pointed out by staff.

She has also offered no openness to what would work for scheduling needs with staff. While some staff prefer to work weekends and evenings, others have family obligations and would prefer not to. Rather than allowing each department to work out scheduling collaboratively, she's now requiring all staff to work 1 in every 4 Saturdays.

Leslie regularly recognizes and praises staff members, whether it is during our All Staff meetings or by submitting a note in Microsoft Teams. I feel that she is also very good at recognizing the strengths of specific staff members, as well as areas of opportunity for growth. I know from personal experience that when Leslie provides constructive feedback, she uses positive and encouraging language. As I mentioned in my response to question number three, my instinct tells me that she is being honest and sincere with me and not just telling me what she thinks I want to hear. I feel that this demonstrates Leslie's confidence and strength as a leader. She takes a positive approach, while also not being afraid to be direct and up front with staff.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

Leslie Tabor severely fails to value people, unless she sees in you a means to an end. If you agree with or somehow buy into her vision, you are most certainly superficially valued and you will get rewarded for it. If she thinks you are able to cajole people/staff into believing her vision you are useful to her. If she thinks you will suitably laugh at her jokes while bowing you head and doing what needs doing, your fear will be welcomed and tolerated as long as you stay the course. If you do not do any of the above, you will be told that you have mental health services at your disposal, benefit time or shown the door. Fear leadership at its most severe.

Leslie takes the time to get to know people -- ALL staff, and volunteers, and the folks we contract. She's dedicated to creating a diverse and inclusive library, and understands that that includes consistent accountability. It sounds corny but she talks the talk AND walks the walk. Some folks only go halfway. She loves doing a lap through the library and talking with staff, she loves getting to know our partners and stakeholders. She loves creating teams with varying strengths that compliment and challenge each other.

Leslie treats some library employees very unfairly who do not align exactly with her vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have a good friend who is a former librarian at TCPL who feels absolutely humiliated and pushed out by Leslie. This former librarian believed that the best implementation of DEI means getting children of all diversities excited about READING, not trying to give them more "junk food for the brain" in the form of video games. Parents who want their kids to read more will basically "be the unfair/oppresive parent" who doesn't let the kids play the video games but makes them choose books to read; the parents who don't care will just let their kids play. This makes the equity gap larger.

This former librarian was forced into Leslie's technology agenda, even though she had one of the children's areas (I won't say which to protect anonymity) under her discretion. Then her hours were forcibly changed to something that absolutely doesn't work for her family, so she had no option but to leave.

This is unfair bullying pushing Leslie's form of DEI interpretation.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

Leslie understands that the job is the people and is very good at listening to feedback and adapting courses of action as needed. She trusts staff to make their own way to a goal, and does not in any way, shape, or form micromanage or helicopter staff, while still expecting stellar results and accountability.

Leslie values efficiency above all and to a degree that is honestly baffling. We don't have a budget shortfall, and yet she seems determined to slash costs (and people) at every turn - the priority seems to be blindly cutting and cutting, rather than thinking about what can be cut and what is necessary in order to provide the services we're here to provide. She most certainly does not value her staff (nor the library's patrons) as people. It seems clear, when looking at the big picture, that even those she's chosen as her favorites are not valued as individuals, but rather cynically chosen as a shield for her, so she can have a group of supporters around her who will claim she can do no wrong. Of course, you will here the opposite story from those supporters themselves. Which is why I encourage the board to engage in critical thinking, which they have not done up to now. And the idea that Leslie shows respect for others' ideas or appreciates differences (or even considers others' needs in her decision-making at all) is honestly laughable. It's hard to even know what to say about that; there is no relationship between those ideas and her management style.

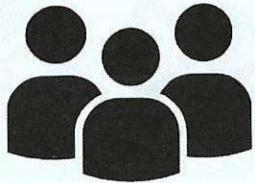
Lezlie has shown no interest in getting to know how the system works, how we're libraries and Tompkins County work together, or getting to know our shared services. Lezlie prefers to act alone and does not seem to acknowledge other people skills.

Seems to operate in an independent manner that is not a team player model

She does whatever she wants, deliberately discourages honest discussion and contributions of differing ideas from staff. Compliance is cemented not by respecting staff and convincing them, but by shutting people up and having them live in fear of retribution for 'wrong think'. Staff in her inner circle will report peers to her if they hear discussions of the changes/ideas in any way that is not approving.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 5

# Values People

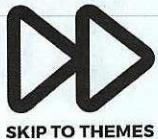
### Comments

No. Leslie has a couple of people she values, and makes it extremely clear who they are. They get lunch and spend time out of work together, and then those same people get promotions, leadership positions, and freedom to do things that others would be reprimanded for. Leslie has said many inappropriate things about staff. She has made statements about a staff members' sexual behaviors to a potential employer, in gossip that has spread to me, a third-hand recipient. She sought out another prior employee's new employer and warned them against her. About an older, fully capable staff member, Leslie said shortly after she herself was hired that "[the staff member] should just [expletive] retire." She has tried to set a subordinate staff member up on a date with her friend, which is inappropriate and was unwelcome. She calls staff members by nicknames she comes up with herself, which they don't like, for example "Handsome \_\_" and adding a "y" to the end of a man's name to make it sound infantile. She makes inappropriate and demeaning comments at meetings, for example making fun of a man for drinking from a water bottle in a way she thought looked like he was a baby drinking from a milk bottle ("does baby need his baba?"). She comments on peoples' appearances, in ways that are unwelcome and unreciprocated, to staff who are worried that asking her to stop will have professional repercussions. All of these examples lead to a feeling of an unsafe, harassing and bullied workplace, even if I am not a direct target of the comments.

She constantly praises staff for their ideas and efforts, managers are now doing the same. "Lower paid" staff, such as myself, are being given equal opportunity to continuing education and professional development. She actively encourages non-conformity and will actively seek out staff who have differing opinions. She is reasonably and accommodating to people's needs, wants, and desires. She has always been very open about all decisions being made and has always made space for people to voice their opinions. Other staff are accustomed to having their opinions treated as ancient knowledge and be revered as elite professions who know better than those without a degree.

Some decisions seem a bit "knee jerk". They're good decisions that maybe need a wee bit more thought and/or bringing others into the decision process who have skin in the game. I think she'd do well to identify the stakeholders and what position they play in a decision before pulling the rip cord.

Where did the kids' book clubs go? Were they discontinued simply because the right kinds of kids weren't participating?





## PART 5

### Values People

#### Comments

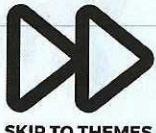
Tabor's ban on work-from-home is an example of how inflexible she is in regard to how work is accomplished. The excuse frequently given is that "not everybody has the capability" to do something like work from home."The obvious answer is to give it to them if it is part of their job responsibilities.. Give them that device or hotspot in order to do the work. If the employee is in a position where work-from-home is not part of their job, that is the job.

There have been occasions where a change is made that staff don't understand or agree with, and when we follow the "chain of command" and give feedback to our direct supervisor/department head, it feels like it stops there. There is an impression that department heads are being told how something is going to work with no regard for other staff opinions or concerns. The director's strong emphasis on chain of command often make lower-level staff feel like our feedback falls on deaf ears.

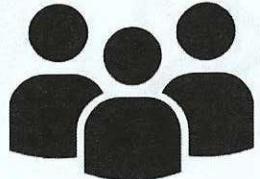
There is a lot here that I just have not observed as a fellow Library Director. I have always seen Leslie in our Directors meetings be respectful of others' ideas but that venue isn't really a place that she would demonstrate these other things.

There's never an attempt to hear dissenting voices when there is a change being discussed. The reaction seems to be to tolerate the speech without consideration and move on. The pressure to go along is very strong. I have stopped trying to express any opinion about anything because I know it is not valued and would be a mark against me. Several employees have resigned in the wake of her changes. I've been through 4 different directors including her and I have never seen resignations like this. I think it's because longevity is not only not respected, it seems to be a liability. New employees have preferential treatment. Seniority is supposed to be considered in hiring for new positions and new employees have been elevated above people who were here for years, already knew the positions they were applying for and in at least one case already had the position they were applying for.

This is a weird one to answer. Leslie is a capital-L leader and a number of staff, at least in her early months, haven't liked that. In general I think that this question is better answered by the department heads.



SKIP TO THEMES



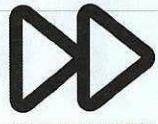
## PART 5

# Values People

### Comments

While I do believe that not every staff member agrees with me, it is my feeling that Leslie deeply values creating a safe and empowering work environment. She is willing to hear people out even when they have made it clear they do not agree with her, and she is considerate while also maintaining the necessary workflows of the library.

Yes, there are a small handful of longtime staff who react badly and with suspicion to change of any kind. And others who are entrenched in the old way of doing things and because they have benefited in some small way from those systems, believe that doing anything different to benefit others is wrong. And they have caused the Library great harm by vocalizing this as well as spreading misinformation due to their own personal sour grapes. However, the vast majority of the staff is overjoyed to be valued and appreciated, to see new and better ways of doing things accepted and permitted, and especially feel safer with her leadership. It's ironic that the few staff complaining about changes are specifically complaining that they're not being allowed to disrespect their LGBTQ coworkers anymore. Can you imagine? "My rights are being infringed because that I have to respect my coworkers' rights."



SKIP TO THEMES

# Valuing People - Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis

## Lack of Involvement & Communication

Many respondents mentioned that there is limited involvement of staff in decision-making processes. They feel that decisions are made without consulting or considering the input of the staff. Communication from the Library Director is also seen as impersonal and lacking in encouragement for feedback.

## Favoritism & Unequal Treatment

Several employees expressed concerns about favoritism, where certain staff members are favored over others. This favoritism can lead to unequal treatment and perceptions of unfairness in promotions, support, and opportunities.

## Lack of Flexibility

Some staff members pointed out that there is a lack of flexibility in work styles and schedules. Decisions are made without considering the diverse needs and preferences of the staff, leading to dissatisfaction among employees.

## Inappropriate Behavior and Comments

There were allegations of inappropriate comments and behavior by the Library Director, including comments related to staff members' appearances, unwelcome nicknames, and even attempts to set up staff members on dates.

## Fear & Retaliation

Some employees expressed fear of retaliation for providing honest feedback or expressing dissenting opinions. They feel that their opinions are not valued, and there is a reluctance to speak up due to concerns about professional repercussions.

## Differences In Leadership Style

There were varying opinions on the Library Director's leadership style, with some employees appreciating her approach to change and openness to feedback, while others felt that her leadership style is inflexible and imposes decisions without adequate consideration.

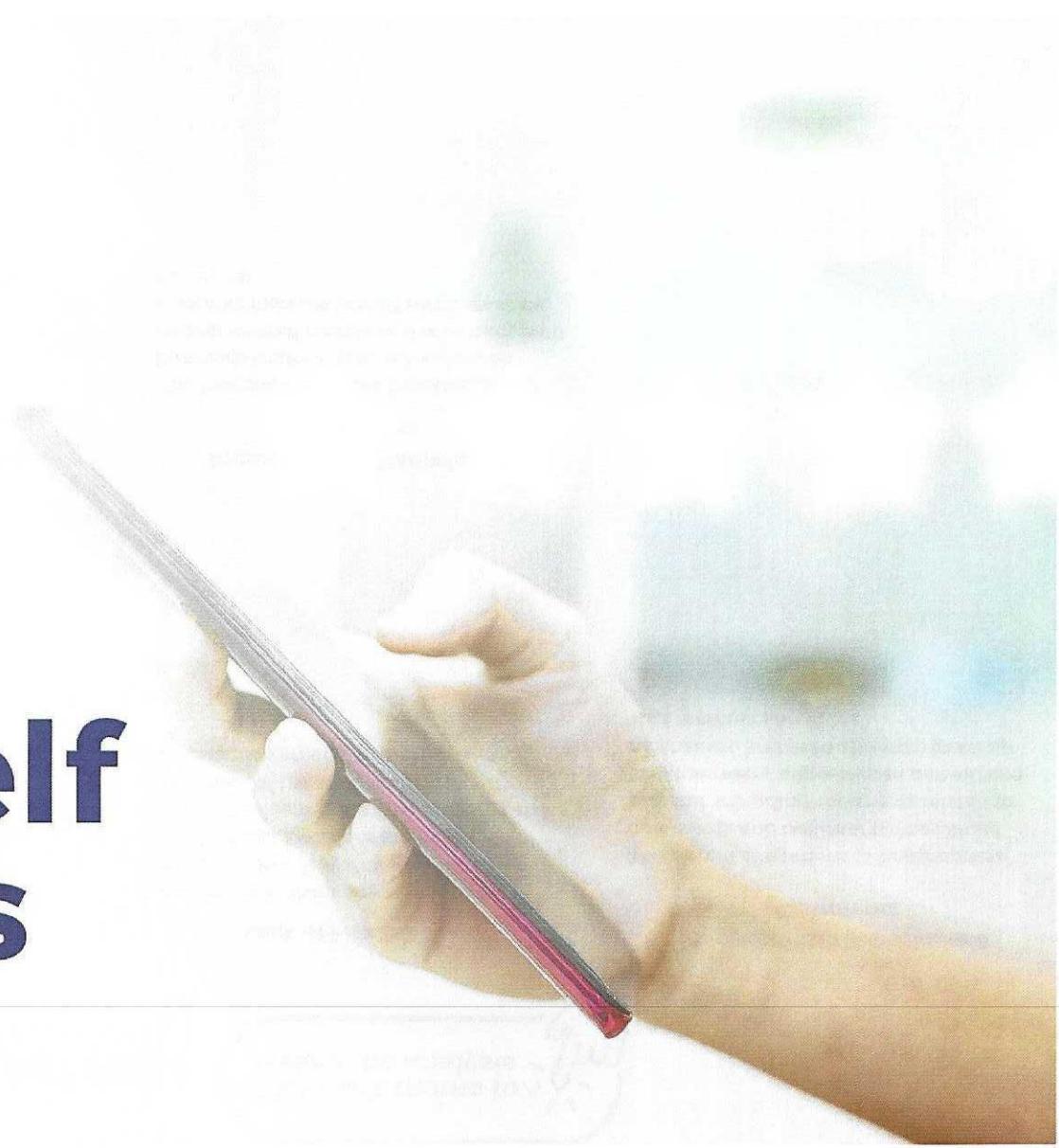
## Impact on Staff Morale and Retention

The feedback indicates that the Library Director's leadership style has had an impact on staff morale and retention, with a notable increase in staff turnover since her arrival.





## Part 6: Develops Self and Others

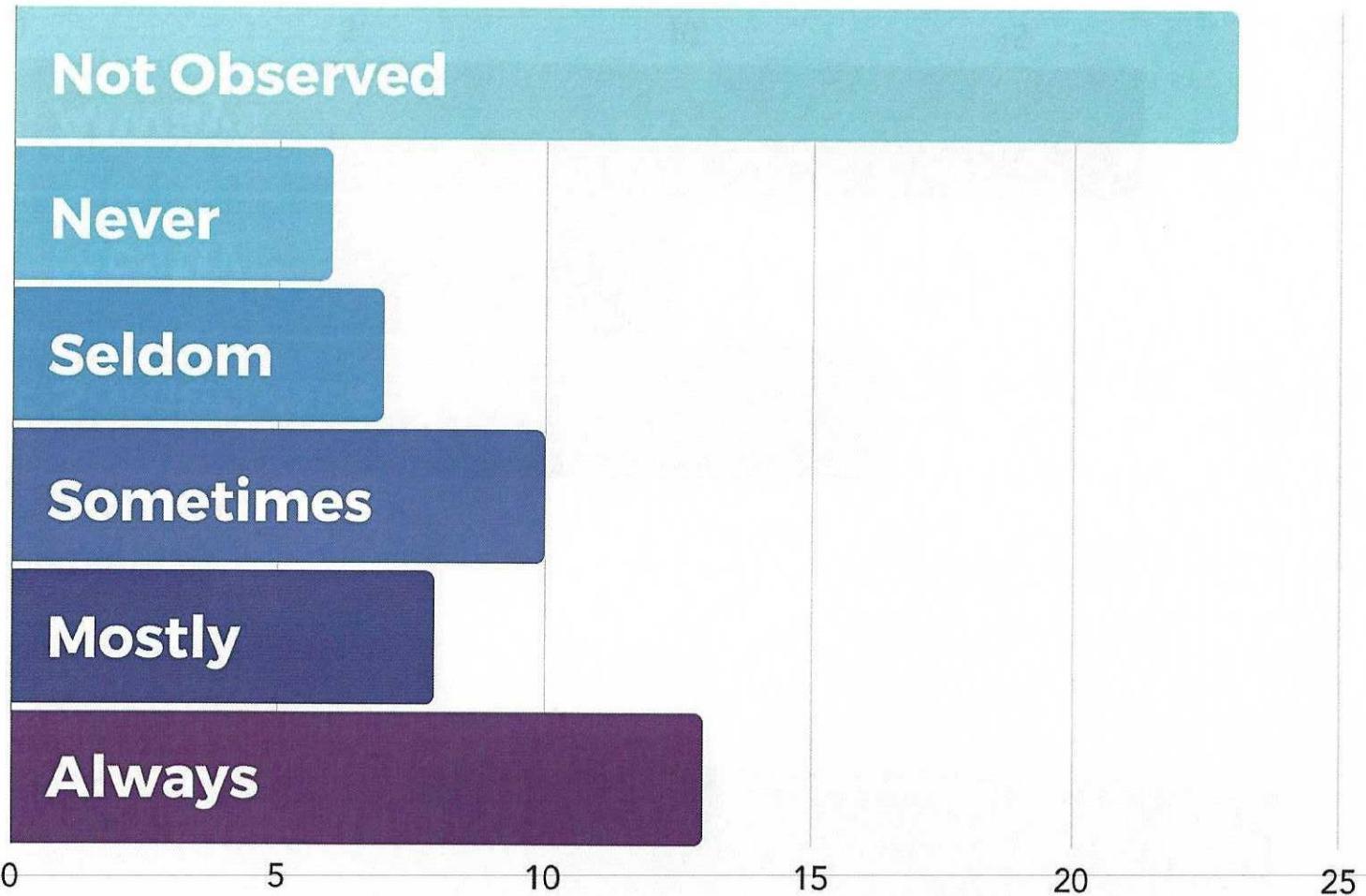




## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

6.1

Demonstrates Personal  
Growth and Learning





## PART 6

### Develops Self and Others

6.2  
Encourages Continuous Growth and Learning of Others





## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

6.3  
Acknowledges Mistakes  
and Learns From Them

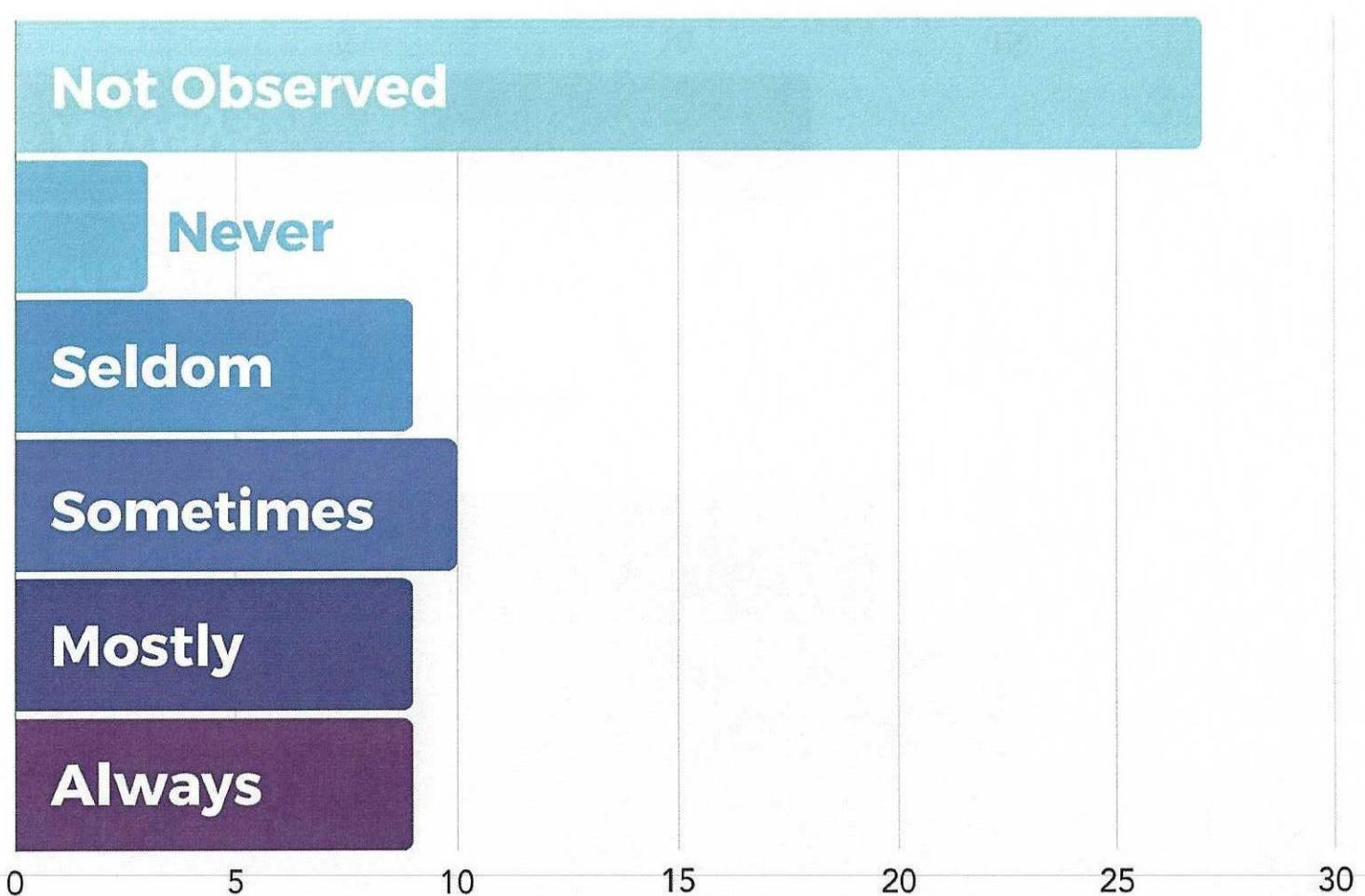




## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

6.4

Sets Clear Performance  
Expectations In Advance

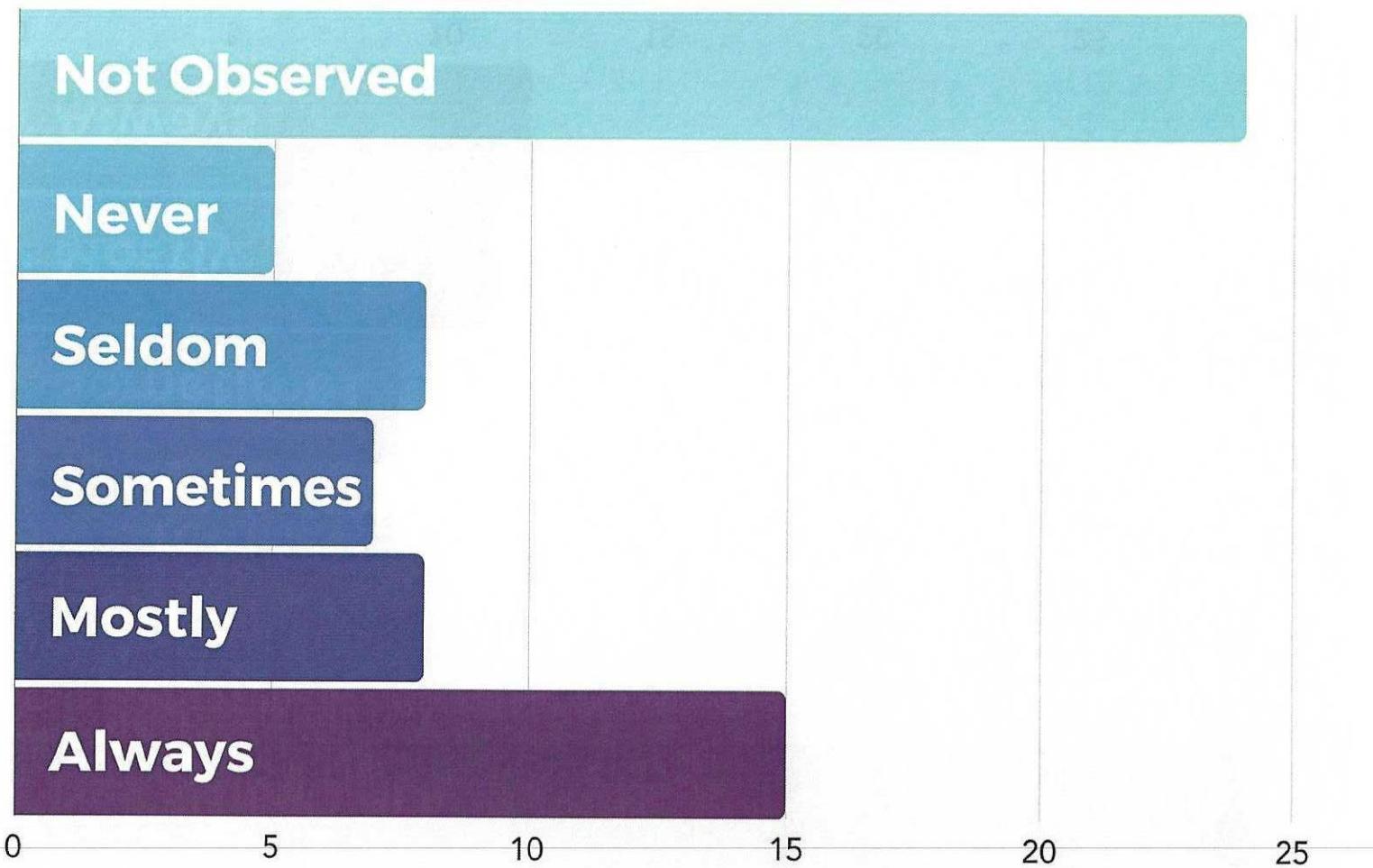




## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

6.5

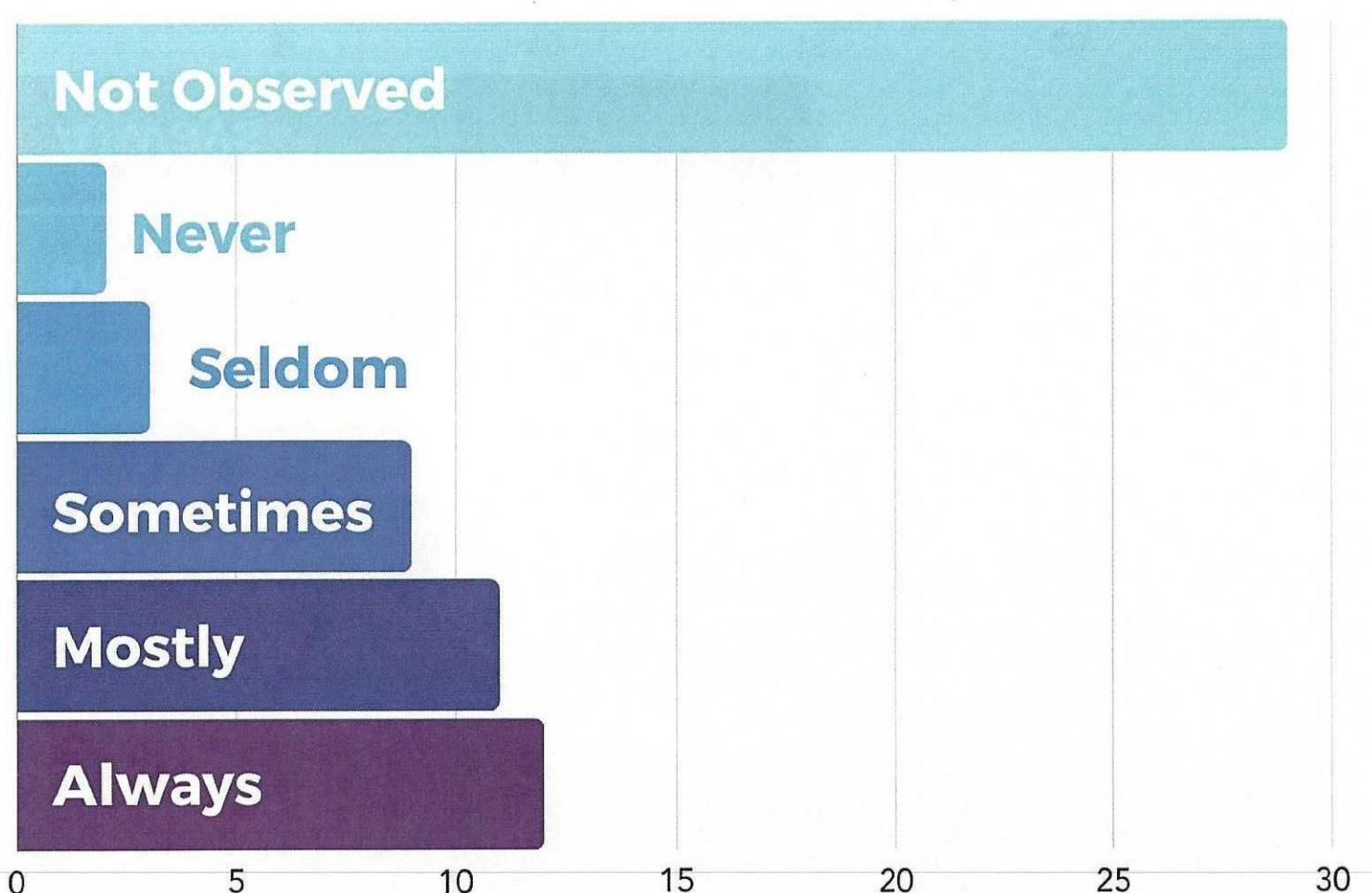
Shares Positive  
Performance Feedback  
That is Timely and Direct





## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

6.6  
Shares Negative  
Performance Feedback  
That is Timely and Direct

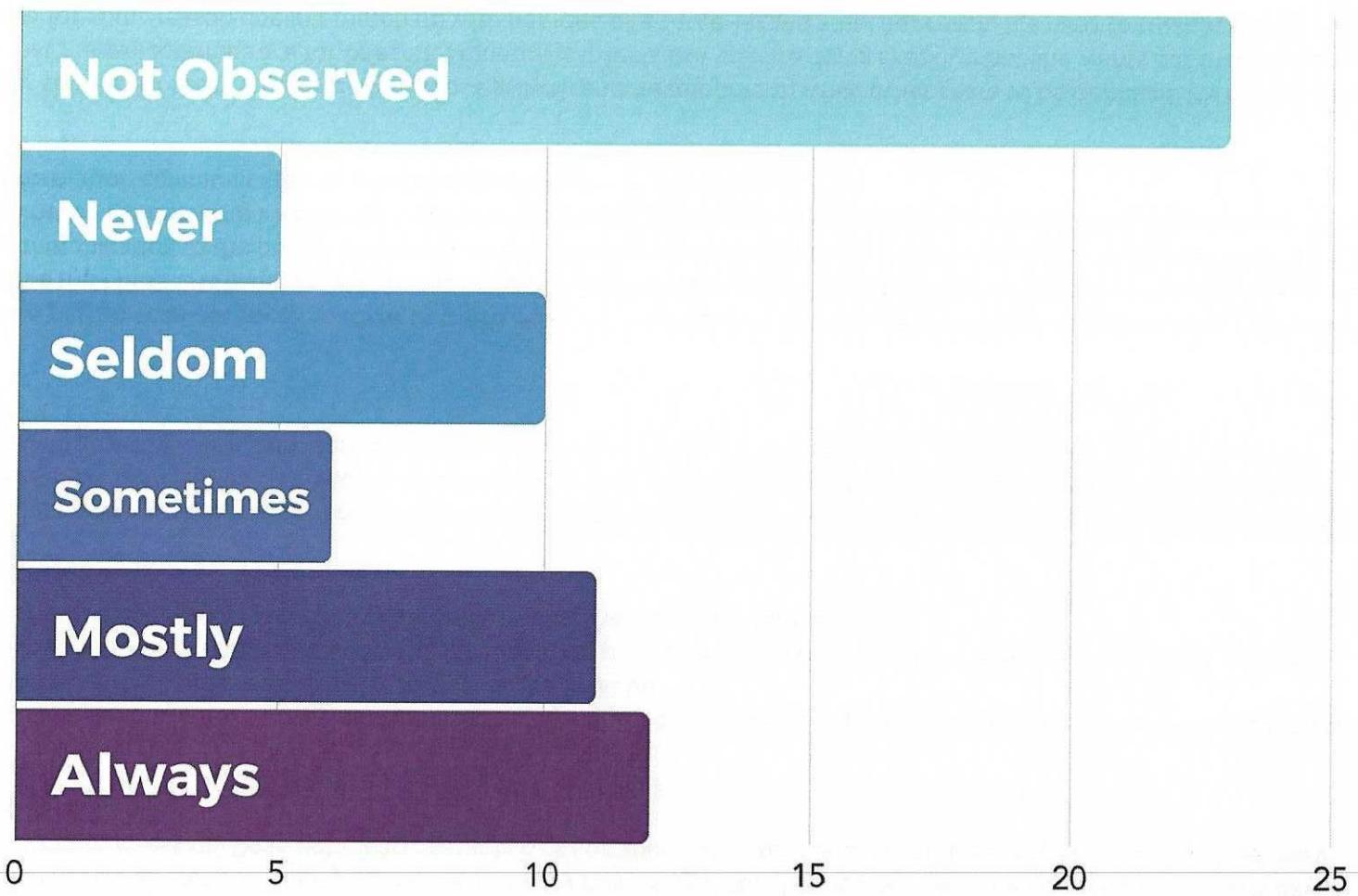




## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

6.7

Sends Candid Messages  
That Are Focused On the  
Issue, Not the Person





## PART 6

### Develops Self and Others

#### Comments

"Nobody knows anything" is her mantra and a sign hanging on the wall in her office. She is never wrong, knows everything, makes no mistakes. It's always someone else's problem. Encourages favorite staff to pursue degrees and training. Gives "bubbly" good job praises, but they don't ring through as genuine. Will say yes or no to requests based on employee asking. Does not clearly establish or communicate expectations and then issues verbal or disciplinary warnings.

6.1: She used to be extremely micromanaging, trying to control everything including what we can or cannot put on the reference desk. Now she's learned to step back a little bit.

6.2: Even though many of us know that the weeding project wasn't a transparent or successful one and it was too rushed, resulting in a loss of many valuable books, she never acknowledged it.

Again, only a couple things here that I would have observed as a fellow Library Director in Tompkins County. I have had personal conversations with Leslie where we talk about growing and learning, and we've talked about professional development, growth, and learning. But I haven't observed any of these performance feedback as I don't work for TCPL.

As a patron I can not speak to most of these. However I do feel that the change of the slips on the reserved books to have the entire last name to just the first 4 letters illustrates a realization that there had been a mistake. There was no communication to the public about this. I had made my comment in person and the Library Director didn't ask my name, so I understand I would not receive any personal direct response, but again, there are many ways to have information communicated to the public and patrons in the library.

For some staff Leslie supports continuous growth and development, while others seem to be benched. It's hard to tell what her expectations are for oneself. Sometimes it feels like you are doing exactly what she wants but then it changes and for some reason doesn't match up with her idea of a three-legged stool approach. It's hard to trust positive feedback from her because you just never know when she'll change her mind or forget.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

### Comments

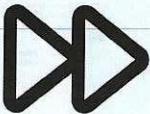
I am aware of Leslie's participation in the Tompkins Leadership program and I can tell that she works to connect with others in our community. I do not have any first hand knowledge of how she works with people who report to her. I listen to her discuss the work she is doing to develop people and to support her staff in many ways. But this is not firsthand knowledge and thus I have not observed in some categories.

I appreciate that Leslie has not shrunk from dealing with issues that have festered for some time. Since she is focused on vision, it is inevitable that some staff will feel upset that they have to share responsibilities with others which were formerly theirs to control. But Leslie emphasizes that this is a team with a purpose much larger than the day to day. She appreciates fresh and alternative ideas.

I have personally seen staff absolutely blossom under Leslie's leadership. I'm so heartened seeing the way these individuals have just lit up and become their best selves with her encouragement. In fact, I had no idea they were as talented as they are, because they were held back so much by previous leadership, all due to things like job titles and status and longevity, and let's be honest, the personalities of leadership. The Library as a whole, and certainly the community, benefits when the talents and skills of all staff are being utilized to their best effect, not hidden under bureaucracy or stifling traditions. Leslie is direct and honest in her communications, specific and generous in praise, intentional and constructive in her criticism.

I have witnessed Leslie use Microsoft Teams and email to cut down staff publicly and shame them. She makes consistent errors in her communication, misremembering, misrepresenting, and mistaking data.

I never got positive performance feedback from Leslie, despite the fact that I have had much patron support and love over my career at TCPL, including up to this current time. As well, Leslie has sent emails out to all staff, and/or engaged in conversation with all staff at meetings, which pointedly mention personal issues and concerns (without naming names) of one or another staff member who has talked with her personally. When a director like Leslie does that, her simultaneous encouragement that her "door is always open" has very negative connotations for those of us who took her up on that with any concerns with how her vision is carried out.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6

### Develops Self and Others

#### Comments

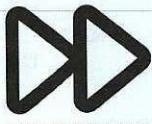
I rarely have a clear understanding of what Leslie's expectations are of me. I've been given a lot of vague generalities via my supervisor, but rarely direct feedback or timelines. It makes it hard to accomplish what she wants, when I hear mostly about what I've done that she doesn't want. It's been a frustrating process of trial and error.

I very much appreciate Leslie's and TCPL's support of professional development endeavors, from attending conferences to making time for webinars from vendors and library resource conferences. I am inspired by the way she shares back information. As mentioned in an earlier section, she has demonstrated a strong ability to recognize when an approach or communication did not go as planned and speaks about how to improve in the future.

I'm so grateful to finally have a boss that can actually mentor and coach me. I would not have gotten to the next level of my career, or been able to grow, without Leslie to give me the acknowledgement, support, constructive criticism, and coaching that she consistently offers. Leslie also loves candor and accepts feedback so long as it's respectful.

In my experience, Leslie just complained about her staff and board. She seems very negative with no positive feedback.

Leslie behaves like she thinks she is tricking the public and board into thinking she is wonderful. For our staff development week, we were subjected to watching a 2017 movie about the New York public library, called *Ex Libris*. The information in it was outdated and not useful, and the movie was over 3 hours long. About two hours into the movie, we see Leslie! She's in the movie, and makes a comment in a meeting! And then we understand why we are watching this film - to see that she's cool and important. The take away for the full day of staff training was her personal self promotion. Other presenters that week that she hired were clearly her friends from previous jobs, benefiting from being paid by TCPL's money while visiting her socially. So many things Leslie does serve herself, rather than the library or community. Her history of jumping from position to position every year or two makes obvious that her dramatic goals for the library serve her personal resume rather than the library at large. She does not respect the staff, believe we are intelligent, or respect our time.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6

### Develops Self and Others

#### Comments

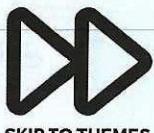
Leslie does encourage growth and learning particularly for support staff but without considering that they are working outside of their job descriptions. Tasks such as ordering for collections are being given to support staff with only a bit of training. This creates an environment where people are not being paid fairly for their work and the work of librarian is being removed. Two librarian positions (those held by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]) have been left empty while we continue to hire more and more support staff. We now have the positions of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] also open and vacant, totally 5 librarian positions. Hopefully in the near future, these will be filled rather than passing more librarian responsibilities on to support staff.

Leslie doesn't back down from addressing criticisms directed at the library or its staff. She is upfront and honest in her feedback, and she tackles an issue even if it is thorny. She is transparent, factual, and upbeat in her responses and communications.

Leslie has demonstrated a lot of learning and growth this year, becoming a leader who I feel I can trust to be open and honest with feedback while also always encouraging staff to learn so that they can provide better service to our community.

Leslie has opened up staff development and advancement in ways not previously seen under other leadership. Some people had been largely prevented from advancing through civil service classifications by overly restrictive interpretations of their jobs, especially in the circulation department. Performance expectations are articulated in a general sense, but could benefit from being more explicitly stated. Some of this has likely been aggravated by the lack of department heads for much of the last year.

Leslie is a breath of fresh air in this regard. She shares victories as well as when a risk didn't work out. We're human, we make mistakes. we learn from them. I see more engaged staff here than I ever have because they are encouraged to learn more about what everyone does, and to collaborate. When an issue arises, Leslie deals with it, and that I appreciate.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6

### Develops Self and Others

#### Comments

Leslie has made it clear to staff and others that she feels people at TCPL have stayed in their positions too long, are stagnant and aren't open to change or new responsibilities. She criticizes staying in a job for 10, 20 or more years. Instead of valuing that people may be good in those positions, proud of their work or are an asset to a department and the library, you are made fun of. Just because she changes jobs every 2 years doesn't mean that others want that for their career.

Positive performance is met with giving out stickers in mailboxes. Some staff few this as childlike and demeaning.

Negative performance is dealt with with write ups, performance improvement plans, or being placed on leave at record numbers. It's odd that a library that seemed to be functioning reasonable well behind the scenes is suddenly an organization where everyone is consistently in trouble with the director.

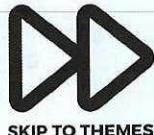
Personal put-downs by Leslie are common. This takes place individually, sometimes when a staff member is walking down the hall, in group meetings, in department head meetings and staff meetings. People's appearance are noted, often critically. One comment was about a staff person's baldness. Other comments have been about people's ages. This is extremely alarming and unethical.

Leslie often mentions in staff meetings that she's never met a more negative group of staff. Yet any type of questioning of her behavior or actions is met with veiled threats, statements that you don't have to work here, or things of that nature.

Leslie has aligned certain staff and is constantly telling her supporters that if another director comes in, the new director wouldn't understand them or that they would fire them. I view this is inappropriate behavior to staff and threatening.

Staff are encouraged to go to Leslie and turn other staff members in for bad behavior, lateness, things done wrong, etc. There is a constant belief among staff that staff are being watched, listened to, and emails read.

Any type of criticism of Leslie is met with a response that you are not supporting a woman of color or a diverse director.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

### Comments

Leslie is a strong proponent of staff development, and encourages staff to seek out opportunities for growth. She consistently shares professional development opportunities with staff, and also coordinated a variety of quality workshops for staff to attend during TCPL's HVAC construction project closure at the end of September. The Polaris LEAP training for staff was already mentioned in question 2. Leslie is also very encouraging of staff to get engaged with the various committees within the organization. Seats on these committees will typically change every one or two years, so staff will have many opportunities to join them if it is something that interests them.

Leslie works very collaboratively with the department heads, so while I may not hear directly from Leslie about all aspects of my job performance, I feel confident that when my department head tells me, Leslie would agree with them.

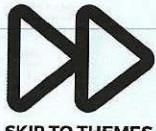
Leslie, in my opinion, has demonstrated a great deal of professionalism and expectation of it from others. She has shown herself to be very experienced in managing dilemmas and conflicts.

I can only put "Sometimes" for 6.6 because I personally have rarely received negative performance feedback from Leslie, and any feedback she has been providing others has remained largely confidential unless that person themselves chooses to share it.

Leslie's feedback is damaging and cuts people down. She'll try to make light of things but underneath she is developing a fear-based style of leading others. It might serve for the short-term but is not sustainable. Her written messages might be focused on the issue because that's a clean paper trail, but her interactions, verbal messages and casual interactions are telling.

On controversial issues, I feel she moves over them too quickly, to get them behind us. Maybe it's hard for her to "sit" in unpleasant feelings for long, and so has to 'resolve' them (to her liking).

People don't seem to feel listened to and others feel like there are favorites or snitches, etc.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6

### Develops Self and Others

#### Comments

Ms. Tabor does not acknowledge mistakes and learn from them. When confronted with a mistake she usually doubles-down and/or gaslights one into thinking she never made the mistake to begin with. This was evident in her willful misinterpretation of the contract in one instance; when her mistake was pointed out she would not back down and it led to a grievance, which was decided in favor of the staff. In another instance, before the HVAC closure she told staff they would be paid for the closed days when there was no staff development but then contradicted herself and announced staff would need to use benefit time to be paid (this went against past precedent and was also a possible contract violation). When staff expressed frustration during department meetings, she later implied that staff were being unreasonable.

Ms. Tabor does not give clear expectations for performance and instead punishes people for not meeting her unspecified standards. Positive feedback for most staff feels empty and very surface. Constructive feedback is rarely given other than admonishment after the fact. All feedback, whether positive or negative, feels inherently personal. Ms. Tabor practices favoritism and it is clear through her words and actions which staff she feels are doing a good job (5-6 staff at most) and which she feels are not (everyone else).

Certain staff are encouraged to grow and learn but not most. While TCPL appears to be increasing its commitment to professional development it is unclear whether the trainings are right for all staff. For instance, the professional development weeks during the HVAC closure were very basic and generally stultifying (though she reported to the Board that the professional development weeks were “very successful”). Subsequent trainings that WOULD be helpful for professional staff have been attended mostly by support staff who do not need the particular skill focus to complete their day-to-day tasks.

She is quick to judge people. Writes employees up for asking legitimate questions in a meeting, and over hearsay. She also writes people up for emails that she decides to interpret the way she wants to.

The amount of encouragement Leslie has provided for professional development is huge, and very welcome. She's also very proactive about sharing positive feedback in a way that makes expectations clear. However, I have overall received more feedback from my direct supervisors.



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## PART 6 Develops Self and Others

### Comments

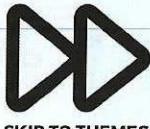
On numerous occasions, Tabor has sent candid messages which publicly call out staff for their appearance vs. performance to the extent that it borders on, and/or actually is harassment. One who has been judged by appearance (whether negatively or positively) is sensitive to this, especially one who, by nature, is private, shy, feels vulnerable, etc. It is absolutely inappropriate and insensitive to continually call attention to a subordinate's appearance, especially publicly via email, posts, or in the presence of others.

Tabor makes comments about staff with mocking undertones - even a compliment re work can be turned into an insult, eg. "thanks" for shelving a cart of books while noting that some task accomplished was, in her words, "cute," thus mitigating the effort performed by staff. Public lack of respect for certain targetted staff is frequently noted

One of Leslie's strengths is her constant feedback. She gives written and verbal feedback on a regular basis in many ways. She is direct and doesn't beat around the bush. Sometimes negative feedback comes across as judgmental but mostly I think staff is just not used to hearing direct feedback. I think white Americans in general are not good at receiving direct feedback. And I think she bumps up against this often here - staff has become used to a very typical way of indirectly communicating around issues rather than addressing them that is rooted in white supremacy "politeness" so anything more direct feels threatening to many people, myself included sometimes. It has been an adjustment to get used to.

Performance expectations could be made much more clear, especially as we are dealing with archaic and somewhat confusing civil service job titles.

She quickly learned, that though she had been upfront in her action plan and vision (when we all enthusiastically demanded the board hire her), that her implementation of said plan would be blocked and slowed at every step. After a month, she made adjustments to her plan, and slowed it down. She encouraged staff who loved her vision and action plan, to encourage and seek out a way to ease tension and anxiety. Slowly, we are bringing the other staff around, to see that she is true to her word and that this vision is as bright and clear as she described. We are slowly getting there. She makes a point to bring attention to her mistakes and to take ownership in errors she makes.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 6

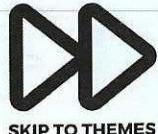
# Develops Self and Others

### Comments

Sometimes she does acknowledge mistakes, but it seems like a tactic rather than that there's any real effort to change the behavior. There aren't really performance expectations or feedback shared on my work, positive or negative. Sometimes it can seem that a message is focusing on the issue, not the person, but when an issue is shut down in an all-staff email that only addresses the actions of a single person and makes it clear, without naming that person who they are, I would say that that is about the person not the issue.

There is not much to reiterate here. Leslie dominates her staff through threats and retaliation. She has literally made numerous members of staff sick from the stress she puts them under. It is a toxic and frightening place to work, and those who had the opportunity to escape and find jobs elsewhere have done so. It should hopefully be evident from this that Leslie certainly does not "demonstrate personal growth" or "acknowledge mistakes" - she only doubles down. And her communications to staff she decides she's displeased with very much accuse and chastise the person, rather than focusing on the issue! (The number of times she has admonished us to "assume positive intent" while blatantly working against our interests and those of the public!)

Sometimes she does acknowledge mistakes, but it seems like a tactic rather than that there's any real effort to change the behavior. There aren't really performance expectations or feedback shared on my work, positive or negative. Sometimes it can seem that a message is focusing on the issue, not the person, but when an issue is shut down in an all-staff email that only addresses the actions of a single person and makes it clear, without naming that person who they are, I would say that that is about the person not the issue.



SKIP TO THEMES

# Developing Self and Others - Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis



## Communication/Feedback

- Mixed feedback on communication. Some appreciate Leslie's directness, while others find her feedback to be negative and personal.
- Concerns about the lack of clear performance expectations and feedback, both positive and negative.
- Mention of Leslie making comments about staff publicly, including their appearance, which some find inappropriate and potentially harassing.

## Leadership Style

- Mixed opinions about Leslie's leadership style. Some feel she encourages growth and learning, while others feel left out or that her support is selective.
- Mention of favoritism and the perception of certain staff members being encouraged more than others.
- Concerns about staff feeling watched and emails being read, leading to a lack of trust.
- Concerns about Leslie's handling of criticism and veiled threats.

## Handling Mistakes/Learning

- Mixed opinions about Leslie's willingness to acknowledge and learn from mistakes.
- Mention of Leslie acknowledging mistakes as a tactic rather than genuine change.
- Some feel she has demonstrated personal growth, while others believe she doubles down on her actions.

## Professional Development

- Positive feedback regarding Leslie's support for professional development.
- Mention of her encouragement for staff to seek growth opportunities and her coordination of workshops and training.

## Management of Conflicts & Dilemmas

Positive feedback about Leslie's professionalism in managing conflicts and dilemmas.

## Library Vision & Changes

- Mention of Leslie's vision for the library and efforts to implement it, although it has faced resistance.
- Some staff are still in the process of coming around to her vision.

## Positive & Negative Performance Recognition

- Mention of positive recognition being perceived as empty by some staff.
- Concerns about negative performance recognition, including write-ups and performance improvement plans.

## Public Perception

Concerns about Leslie's public image, with some staff perceiving her actions as self-serving rather than in the best interest of the library and community.

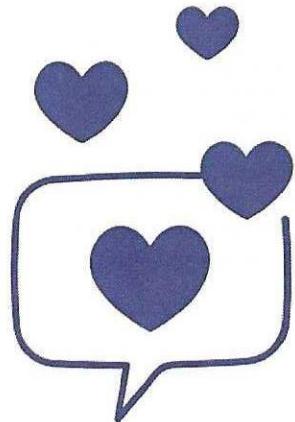
## Criticism & Complaints

Mention of Leslie's response to criticism, including writing staff up for asking questions or interpreting emails in a certain way.

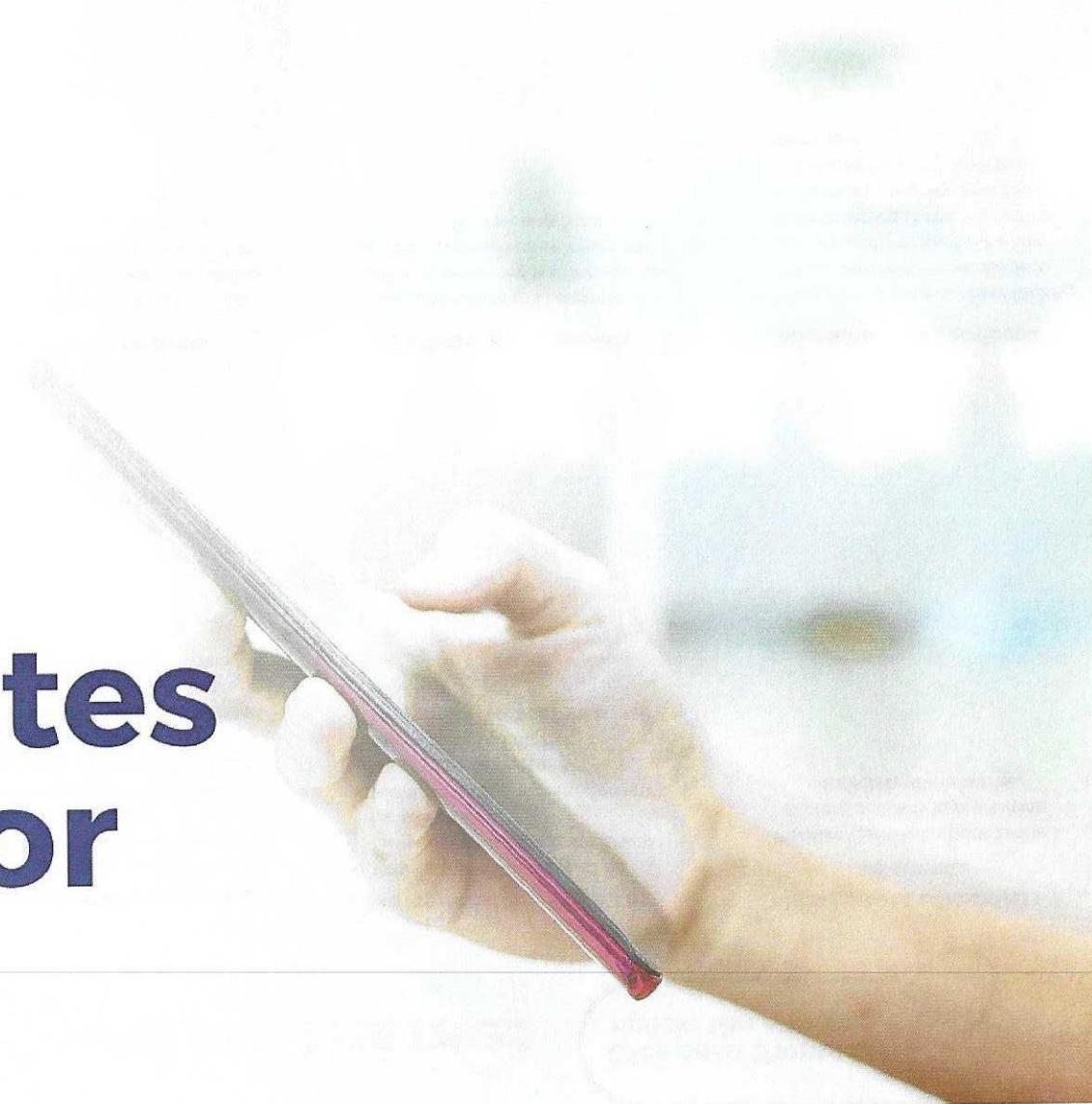
## Miscellaneous Feedback

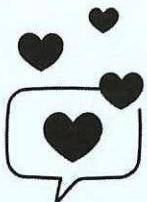
- Mention of staff members feeling uneasy and fearing retaliation.
- Some mention that Leslie has been involved in the Tompkins Leadership program and has worked to connect with the community.





## Part 7: **Communicates with Candor**



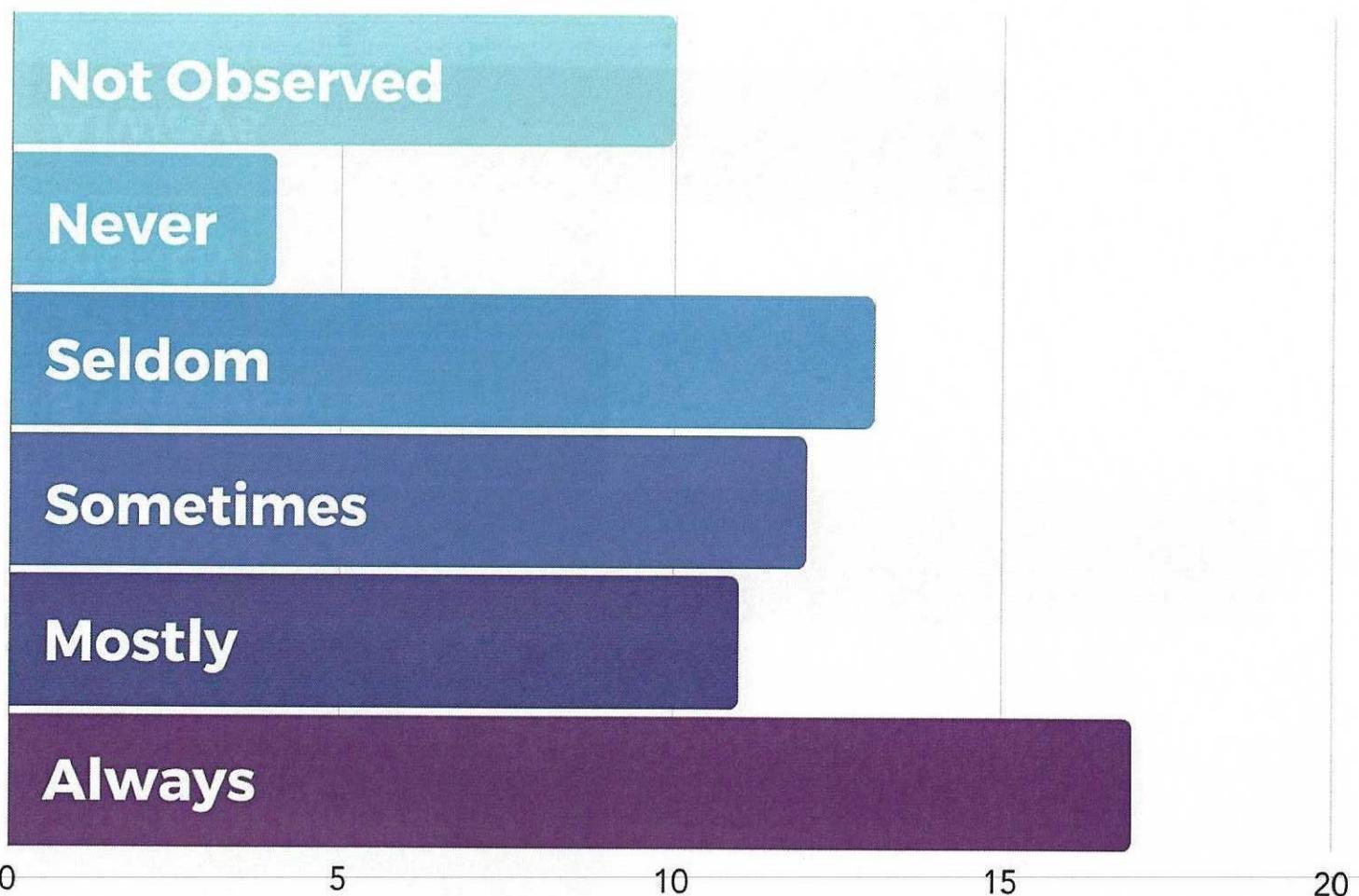


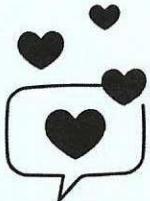
## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

7.1

Communicates Effectively and Continuously

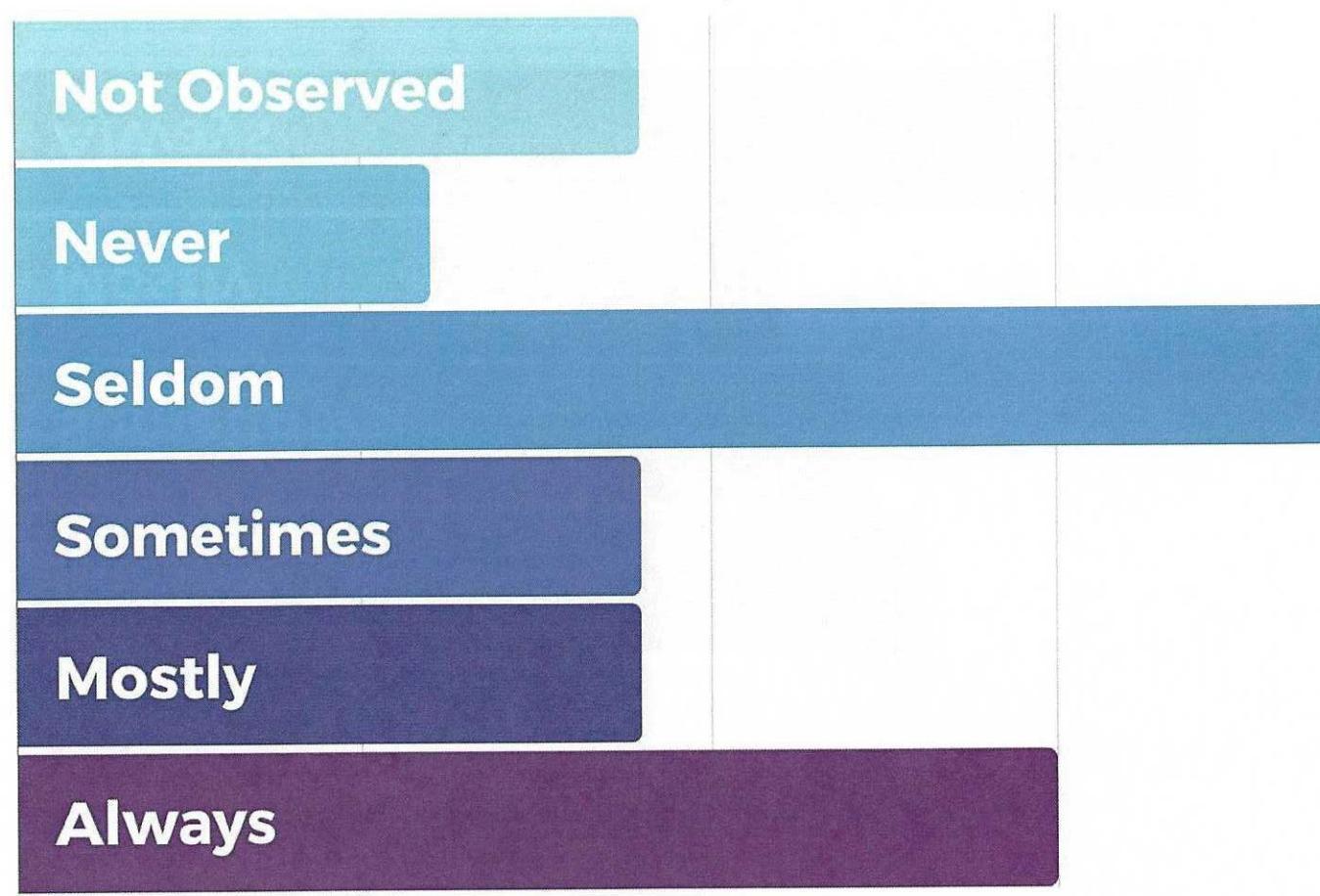




## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

7.2  
Listens to What Others  
Have to Say



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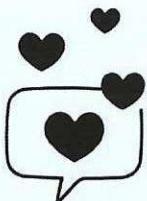
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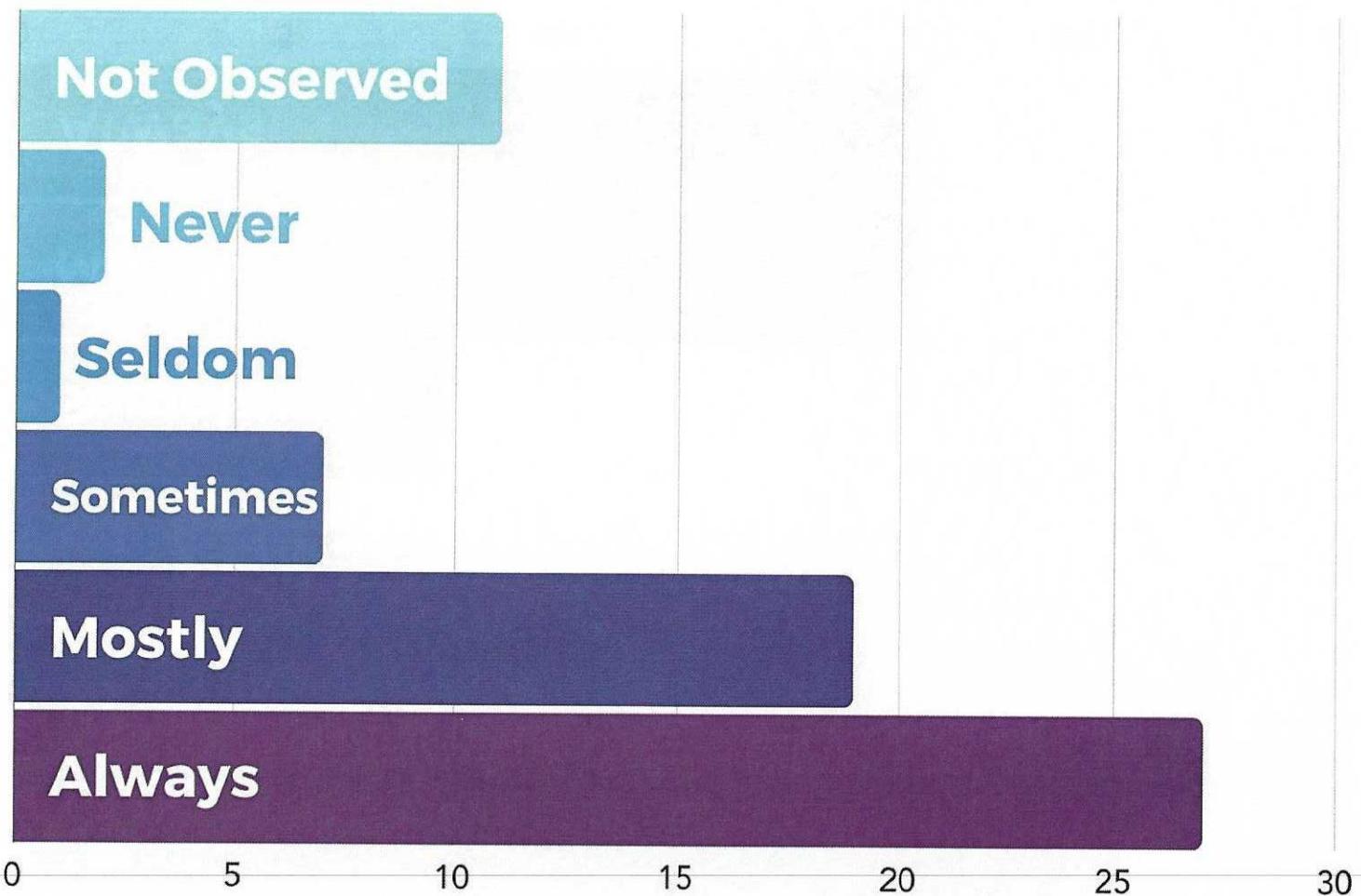


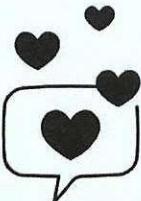


## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

7.3  
Shares Opinions Even  
When Unpopular

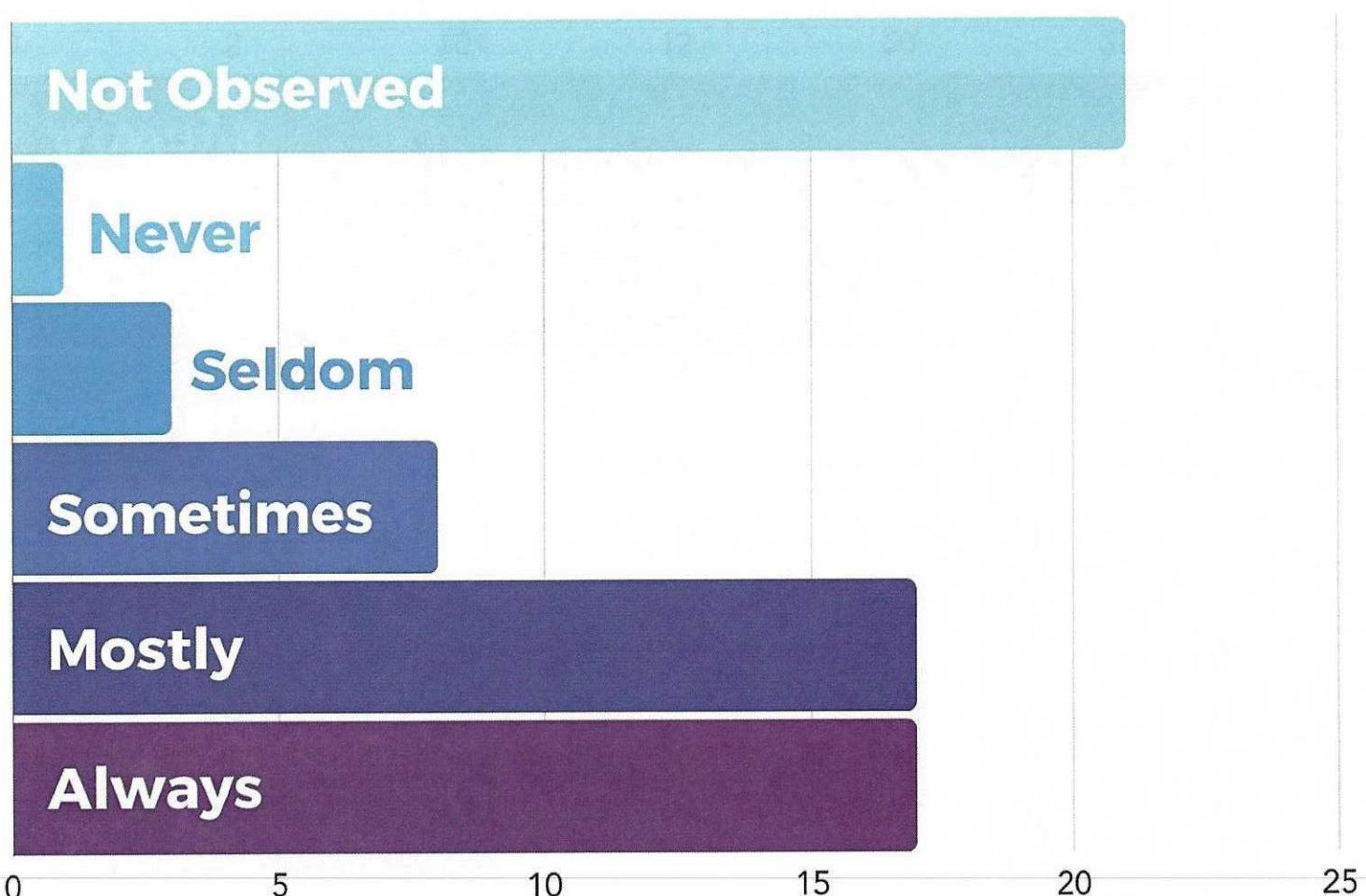


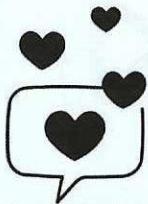


## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

7.4  
Expresses Disagreement  
Earlier Than Later





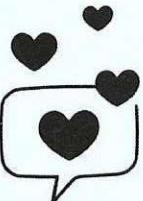
## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

7.5

Makes Others Feel Safe In  
Honestly Expressing  
Themselves





## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

#### Comments

7.5: We've lost many excellent staff members in the past one year. If people felt safe to express themselves, they wouldn't have had to quit the jobs they really loved. We've never lost so many staff members in one year.

As a group, Tompkins County Libraries worked together to create a common loaning policy. Leslie changed TCPL's without including any of the rural libraries and we only found out after the fact. I do not consider this good communication nor collaborative behavior.

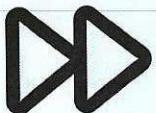
I will add that she is quite funny - the few times I have been around her, she cracks a good joke.

Communicating with candor is something that stood out to me about Leslie from day one. One example is how she very clearly explained TCPL's weeding project to staff on several occasions: weeding needs to take place every day, on a regular basis (which TCPL was not doing), this specific project is a priority to help make the RFID project a more efficient process. I give Leslie credit for her patience during these projects, because she has had to explain and re-explain the need for weeding several times. In my opinion, she was clear and articulate the very first time she explained it. So, I am not sure where the disconnect occurred for some of TCPL's staff members. I commend Leslie's ability to stay calm and focused during each additional explanation.

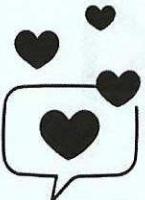
Communication has probably been the biggest hurdle this year, with both the community and staff. Under a lot of pressure, Leslie has shown a willingness to learn and a grace in accepting when her communication has not been effective. I am excited to see how much the work environment has improved in a short amount of time as Leslie has learned how to communicate with staff and the community in more and more effective ways.

Director: come out of your office once in a while and observe.

From day 1, Leslie has communicated incredibly well with me personally and with the team as a whole. She has made it clear how information flows and understands that some members of the team sometimes need to hear new information multiple times or in different formats for it to connect.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

# Communicates With Candor

## Comments

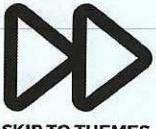
Early on, Leslie performed a wave of employee write-ups, which up until then had been rare. Many of us, even ones who were not written up, were confused by why some folks were written up while others did not. A couple of them seemed random and excessive. It did put us in a place of fear, for a while, not sure how to please the director or what exactly would cause her ire. I haven't heard of any write-ups for a while (and staff loves to talk, so I'm pretty sure I'd hear something) so this may have been a strategic tactic. I myself feel very safe in communicating with Leslie and being honest with her; I feel like she's always open to what I have to say and provides clear support and feedback.

Everything is a power game with Leslie. Her favorites are showered with praise, while anyone she's decided she's against is left walking on eggshells, never knowing when she'll put a write-up in their file because she didn't like their "tone," or change the requirements of their job without notice and then accuse them of not having already performed those duties. (e.g., Circulation Clerks were suddenly accused of not shelving enough, when in fact Clerks had started shelving more than was in their job description, in order to help out the Pages who were overworked; some were accused of not shelving when in fact they had been shelving; one of the director's favorites never seemed to be required to shelve even though everyone else was, etc.)

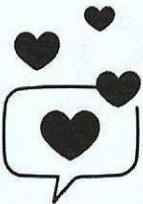
Her style is breezy, humorous, and informal. Early on I found it difficult to tell what she was saying with her boss hat on, so to speak. I've always felt safe disagreeing with her in a meeting setting, though, and have seen some robust disagreement from staff. I think she tends to have her mind made up before bringing up something in an all-staff meeting, but she leaves space for discussion nonetheless and I at least have not experienced any retaliation for expressing doubts or concerns.

I almost think people have stopped trying to go through her, but are now going around her.

I am not a TCPL employee and have had few occasions to observe these traits in the director. However the fact that the director was on her phone during the public comment period at the November meeting leads me to conclude that she does not listen "to what others have to say," and the hostility which I and others have felt from the library staff leads me to feel that she does not make "others feel safe in honestly expressing themselves."



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

#### Comments

I do not feel safe expressing any concerns to Leslie anymore. I tried that and now I am not in her good graces, although she is perfectly able to smile and say hello, lol. As am I.

I feel like Leslie is a very good communicator. She shares her opinions and listens to what others have to say- and is professional even if her folks disagree.

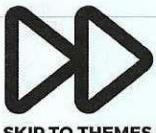
I feel mostly safe expressing myself honestly with Leslie, even when I know we disagree. I don't fear retaliation or punishment and I think we have a great communicative relationship. However, many staff have expressed that they do not feel as safe and that their words get used against them later on. I don't think that is just because those staff members struggle with directness and honesty - I do think there is some favoritism at play here.

I feel so unsafe that I can't even have a candid discussion at my desk if others are nearby, can't in email either since she has right to read or investigate that too.

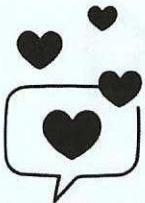
I felt like the Library Director was responding to my comments with a standard response that did not incorporate what I was saying. Yes, the Director listened and didn't interrupt me, however the Director did not make me feel listened to or heard on a deeper level.

I have heard the she does not create an environment that is conducive to open expression of opposite or unpopular opinions

I have mentioned many ways in which Leslie does this. I have placed a "not observed" because no one on the foundation works for Leslie and therefore we would never be in a position in which we might potentially be concerned. I cannot imagine Leslie NOT working to create a safe space, but this is outside the range of my observations.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

#### Comments

I have observed an air of distrust between some staff and the director. There was certainly a mood shift when staff seemed to be leaving without notice soon after Leslie came on board. While change in personnel is inevitable (and in some cases a good thing), it was a bit unsettling that every department head abandoned ship.

I rarely feel listened to with how she constantly changes the narrative. Leslie, seems to have a goal in mind and will step around anyone's alternative idea or suggestion. I feel very anxious when I have to bring up a counter to her ideas or plans.

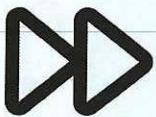
I think this also falls under the auspices of Professionalism, and I think whether this goes one way, or the other is largely dependent on how someone reacts to that.

I personally feel more confident in discussing opinions and expressing myself around Leslie, as I find her communication straight forward and honestly delivered without rancor.

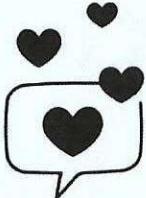
I've observed Leslie interacting with a staff member - something about the order of taking breaks and who could go next and the conditions of the break, but the body language for both individuals was immediately tense and strained.

This seemed to be a theme that was discussed at the circulation desk for a while when there seemed to be a lot of change happening: who's next on break; who has to be where; who can go in the back. I think people were getting their bearings with new rules and systems and it all looked a bit stressful. I wondered if there wasn't enough direction in the transition or if staff felt protective of the experience they had come to enjoy and expect.

I've touched on all these things previously. A communications/public relations office is a necessity to facilitate the changes that need to happen at the Library, to ensure ongoing goodwill and community information, and anticipate any future concerns where the voices and support of patrons and the public will be needed.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

### Communicates With Candor

#### Comments

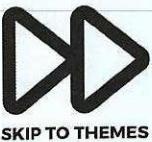
In our Directors meetings, Leslie is an effective communicator about her ideas and reporting on the state of things at TCPL. She listens to others in that meeting with respect but isn't scared to disagree. I appreciate her open and direct communication style and I find her easy to talk to.

Issues routine emails and has continued established monthly meetings with staff. Seems to be listening but often it often feels like this is pretense and she continues to hammer out her message. Has not established a rapport with the community and has made no effort with the TCPL website, phone messaging, or other publicly distributed information. Removed hours information banner outside because she didn't like how it looked.

Is still doing icebreakers with staff after a full year which I don't think should be necessary at this point. Has no problem expressing her opinions and doesn't care if they are unpopular. Staff do not feel safe expressing their feelings if they are contrary to the Director's will.

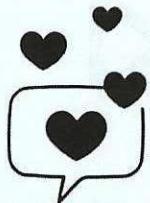
Deliberately deceptive in her communications. Have observed her being less than transparent with the public and board members multiple times.

It seems like there could have been much better communication with the patron community, and staff, about the book weeding. Staff gave differing explanations for why shelves were suddenly so empty, because it seemed like they weren't given clear guidance on how to message to patrons. There was a late notice posted on the website from Leslie, but no explanation about how weeding decisions are made. I would really have appreciated the specific metrics that were applied to determine which books would be removed -- how long ago they last circulated, some standards of condition, something else? It is completely opaque why so many books were removed and why others weren't, and what would be replaced and what wouldn't.



Leslie has been rude, she has very little interest in other people's opinions, and is aggressive when challenged.





## PART 7

# Communicates With Candor

## Comments

Leslie communicates with candor and emotion. Sometimes this can be startling to staff members who are not used to direct communication. I think this is not a bad thing and should lead to those staff members developing more in the future. As is always the case, communication is in constant need of improvement and an area of improvement, but no more so than at other places.

Leslie is an extremely clear communicator. And, in my experience, her communication has been direct and honest without being hurtful or tone-deaf.

Leslie sets expectations by modeling open communication. She has had to deliver unpopular information many times but she is refreshingly straightforward and empowers staff by assuming they want and need to know as much about the library as possible. Not everyone wants to hear the naked truth but Leslie knows this is essential in getting buy in from staff.

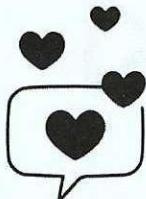
Ms. Tabor's communication style is extremely corporate and rife with military-style phrases ("up the chain," "chain of command,"). She often contradicts herself and then gaslights staff into thinking they're in the wrong (the HVAC communication around paid days is a good example of this). Staff she should be in regular communication with she has effectively cut off (including administration and communication staff) in favor of developing a trusted inner circle of acolytes.

The environment Ms. Tabor has created during the last year makes most staff extremely uncomfortable in expressing themselves honestly. The TCPL Board is hearing only the voices of those Ms. Tabor favors. Everyone else is too scared to speak up for fear of repercussions.

Openly expresses her point of view in a clear and compelling manner, and warmly encourages others to do so



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

# Communicates With Candor

## Comments

Oh lord, Leslie is the bravest person I have ever worked with. Shares her vision and our direction with clarity in multiple ways: through dept heads, at all staff meetings, in email... puts herself out there rather than hiding behind email or in her office, listens to feedback, responds in a timely manner with total transparency. And deals with a lot of back-door secret baloney from bad actors with grace. She's so open! And just endless energy and patience.

She sends out frequent all-staff email updates, which is more than some previous directors have done. On the other hand, just this week, we started a new closing procedure, but it wasn't mentioned during the morning staff meeting that I attended so I wasn't able to really ask questions about it before implementation. No official announcement was sent out before it started the same day we got back from the holidays, so I only happened to find out in conversation with someone who attended the afternoon staff meeting, where it was announced. On a more individual communication level, once, there was a task she wanted me to complete but she never actually spoke to me or my supervisor about it; we only knew she wanted it done because it was mentioned in an all-staff email and another staff member told my supervisor that Leslie was upset we hadn't done it yet.

Personally, I do not feel comfortable honestly expressing myself to her most of the time, for reasons explained here and in the other sections. When I do try, I don't feel like she listens to me much or particularly values my opinion.

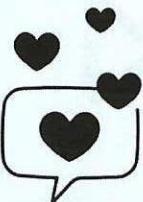
She twists everything to justify her writing people up

The environment Leslie has created is incredibly unsafe - which is a breach of union contract. She has made 5 people quit who felt unsafe in the workplace, and driven more to need to take medical and personal leaves in order to survive.

Was there any chance she was going to be dissuaded from culling the shelves to place little stickers on the spines? Browsing the shelves is almost impossible now.



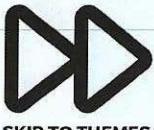
SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

# Communicates With Candor

## Comments



[SKIP TO THEMES](#)

She is very good at communication. She thinks on her feet and can talk circles around anyone, but that quality feels weaponized. There may be an upsetting and bad decision that you know is wrong. The director sells it to you in a meeting like it's a good thing, but you know it really isn't, but now you've been so gas-lighted by this person you don't know which end is up and are utterly confused and unsettled. That's how she communicates. Her communication feels manipulative.

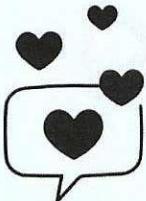
She has listened to what I had to say, but I have no idea if she actually ever used the information that I gave her. I feel sure that typically what others say doesn't affect her opinion. The director has said that we should feel free to talk to her, but it doesn't feel like that's an honest offer. For example, a worker who spoke up in a group email about throwing books into the garbage and asked to brainstorm ideas to be able to recycle some of these materials, a perfectly reasonable request, was shut down and told by the director in a reply that she was tired of 'litigating' this issue with the worker. This was a policy that should 100% be examined and fixed. It would also build trust with patrons for them to know that these books were being recycled in some way, however, the director didn't want to hear it. An employee attempted to weigh in on an issue in a staff meeting and the director behaved unprofessionally by snapping mockingly at the employee.

She does not make others feel safe in honestly expressing themselves. The work environment feels very unsafe. There is a strong feeling that to speak out about any policy that seems harmful will lead to repercussions. The director has surrounded herself with a few loud supporters and has rewarded them for their support. This has created distrust between coworkers as some of these favored employees have reported to the director other employees that spoke privately about their disagreement with the changes.

In a professional development training, we were warned by the library's lawyer that we cannot speak out about disagreeing with the direction that the library is going in even in our own private social media accounts because we could be sued. This felt threatening. We are not allowed to speak about what's going on at the library. There was a board meeting that included many members of the community who were concerned about the new practices at the library. Workers were invited to speak at the meeting, but only workers who agreed with the policies spoke and defended the changes. These workers also gave misleading and false information that was not refuted. We can't even feel free to refute incorrect information. If we can't relate our position on the changes at the library on our own private social media accounts to friends because it could lead to a lawsuit, how could speaking out publicly at a board meeting not also lead to a lawsuit? How could being slapped with a lawsuit not also cause expulsion from our jobs? Employees with contrary points of view cannot speak to the experience of workers here, so the environment goes without scrutiny and job security feels nonexistent.

There was a legislator that was asking questions about the things that were going on at the library and was willing to speak to employees, but I did not speak to her because I feared I would be found out and retaliated against.

I have chosen not to grieve things through our union that I felt were clear violations of past precedent and of civil service rules and our contract for fear of being targeted. I have invested years into this place in a job that I have loved but I feel stuck because I need to keep my job that pays well and has good health insurance. So, I have just given up and feel sad and hopeless. That's how I feel about the leadership this director has offered. That is where her leadership has led me.



## PART 7

# Communicates With Candor

## Comments

Something I've experienced is that Leslie will say one thing during a meeting, and then change her mind. Rather than expressing that she changed her mind, she will act as if the others who were present are making faux pas, or that they misunderstood her directives. One especially problematic email followed a meeting regarding the growth of an underdeveloped library space, and her message repeatedly ended each paragraph with "Is this what everyone else heard?" as if we all hadn't been at the same meeting.

Another example is when she told staff that there would be paid days off during the HVAC repair week. She later changed her mind and sent a bizarre email with examples of how characters from Star Wars could use their benefit time to pay for the time off when the library was closed, or could work on a weekend. This was not only a contract violation, but directly contradicted her previous directives. The use of the Star Wars characters was infantilizing and rude to professional staff who should not have been required to spend their earned vacation time on a library closure. The majority of staff expressed concern over this decision, and it was reversed, but not until after much consternation and discussion.

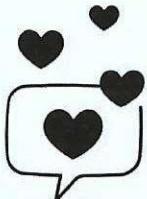
This style of communication is unhelpful and disorienting. I and another meeting attendee at the first example agreed that we did NOT hear what Leslie claimed to have communicated, but also that our responses would fall on deaf ears. Rather than drive forward the plans, we acquiesced to Leslie's vision to do nothing to pursue growth, which remains the state of the space at this time.

Tabor acknowledged poor communication re the weeding process and RFID project.. After numerous complaints from the community, she committed to more information re the closure for the HVAC install. It's funny, though, how she put more emphasis on commanding and complementing herself on learning from the previous miscommunication and couching the problem in another message which was that people "just don't understand how to run a library and maintain a collection" and that her process is the only way (which isn't true.) (See the resources from "Collection 101" and forwarded by Leslie to staff from workshop regarding Collection Development and Management. Did she even read it?)

I do not feel safe in this workplace to express myself. Witness the exodus of staff from this place . I've learned to hold my tongue because retaliation through humiliation and embarrassment - sometimes openly and sometimes subtly - is her way of dealing with people she doesn't like and wants gone. Several staff have expressed or advised, "Shut up and keep your head down" if you want to keep your job.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 7

# Communicates With Candor

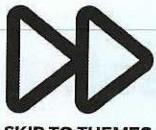
## Comments

The majority of staff do not feel they can honestly express themselves at work. Emails to staff constantly explain the chain of command, that the library lawyer used in staff training reminds them that they can't share personal opinions, that you must share one voice as one team. To not do so undermines the library's work. Emails are sent out to staff explaining "if our house is divided, we cannot stand." Does any of that sound like staff can express themselves?

Communication to staff is frequent, detailed and extremely long. Leslie tells staff that she is an excellent communicator yet seems to not understand that communication is a team effort and not just talking one-sided to people.

While I can't personally say that I haven't felt safe honestly expressing myself, I have observed that there is an air of distrust between some staff and upper management. A sense of being scared to say something negative in fear of being observed and reported.

While Leslie does send many emails and is quite eloquent, the communication is all one-sided and full of gaps. Staff are routinely in the dark on important things, leaving a gap that creates an environment ripe with gossip and hearsay. For example, details of our professional development weeks were delayed until the last minute and staff changes are just suddenly announced (staff changing departments, duties, suddenly quitting, etc.) with no discussion. The roll-out of weeding for RFID was begun with little to no communication to the staff. When questioned, Leslie becomes defensive and staff have become fearful of speaking out. The culture of fear has gotten quite intense at TCPL with staff being afraid to speak up at meetings that Leslie and her supporters attend. Department heads are then having to take more responsibility to address staff concerns individually rather than being able to openly talk through issues as a group.



SKIP TO THEMES

# Communicates With Candor – Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis

## Employee Turnover & Communication

Several comments mention the loss of staff members over the past year and attribute it to a lack of feeling safe to express themselves. This suggests a concern about communication and its impact on staff retention.

## Communication Style

Leslie's communication style is mentioned multiple times. Some find her communication to be clear, direct, and even humorous, while others feel it can be confusing, manipulative, and confrontational. There is a mix of opinions on her communication style.

## Open Expression & Safety

There are varying opinions on whether employees feel safe expressing themselves honestly. Some feel safe, while others express fear of retaliation or repercussions for expressing differing opinions.

## Perceived Favoritism

Some comments suggest that Leslie may show favoritism, which affects how employees are treated and evaluated. This perceived favoritism can lead to a lack of trust among staff.

## Lack of Transparency

Several comments mention a lack of transparency in communication, including sudden announcements of changes and unclear messaging about library decisions, such as book weeding.

## Staff Tensions

Tensions among staff members are mentioned, particularly in the context of changes in library policies and procedures. These tensions appear to be related to communication issues.

## Community Relations

There are concerns about how Leslie communicates with the library's community and patrons, with mentions of miscommunication and a need for improved public relations.

## Board & Community Feedback

Some comments reference feedback from the library board and the community, suggesting that concerns have been raised externally.

## Legal Concerns

Legal concerns related to staff expressing opinions, such as on social media or at board meetings, are mentioned. Employees fear potential lawsuits.

## Safety & Trust

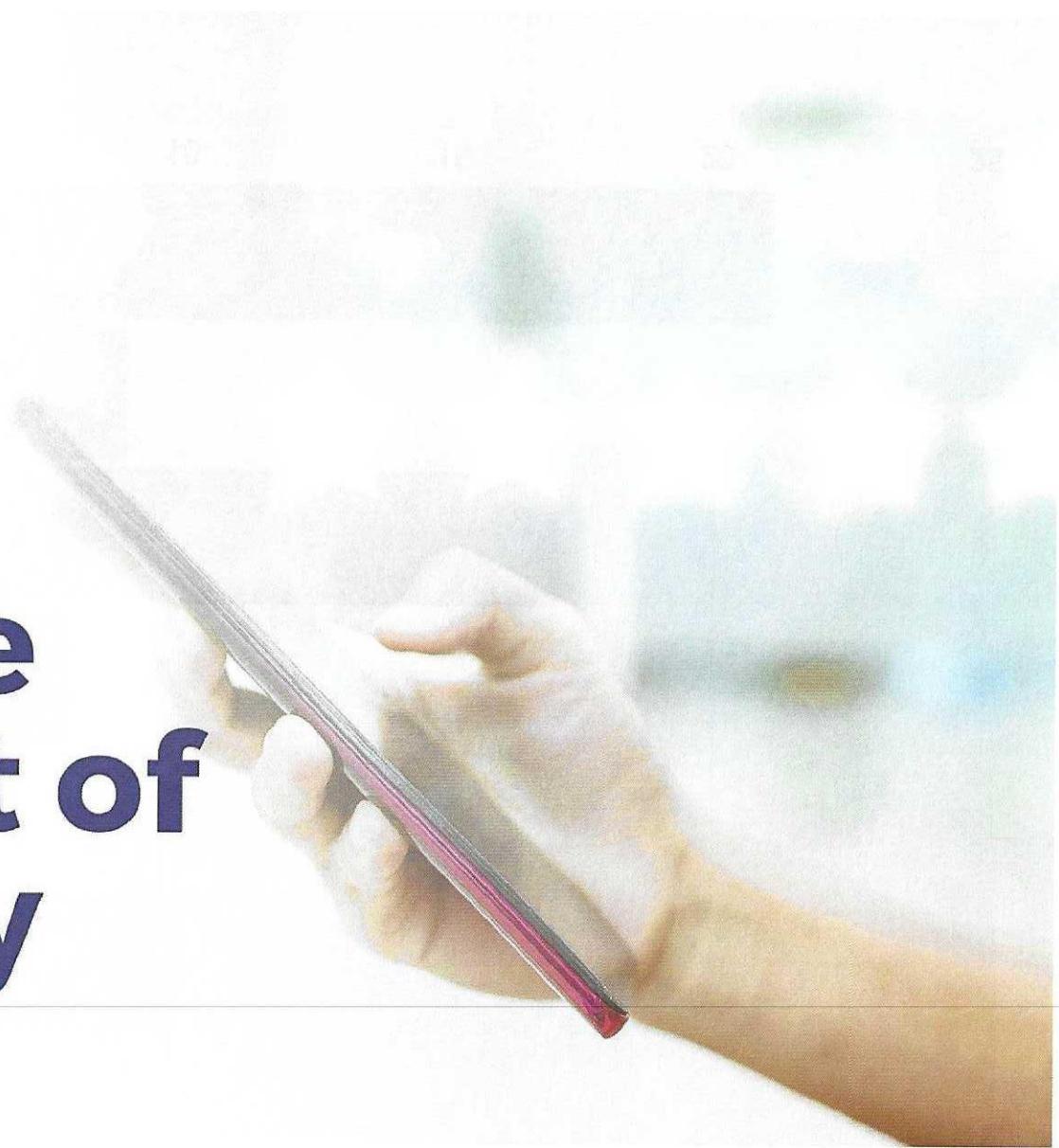
The overall theme revolves around the sense of safety, trust, and transparency in the workplace, with varying degrees of comfort expressed by employees in expressing themselves and engaging in open dialogue.





## **Part 8:**

# **Acts in the Best Interest of the Library**

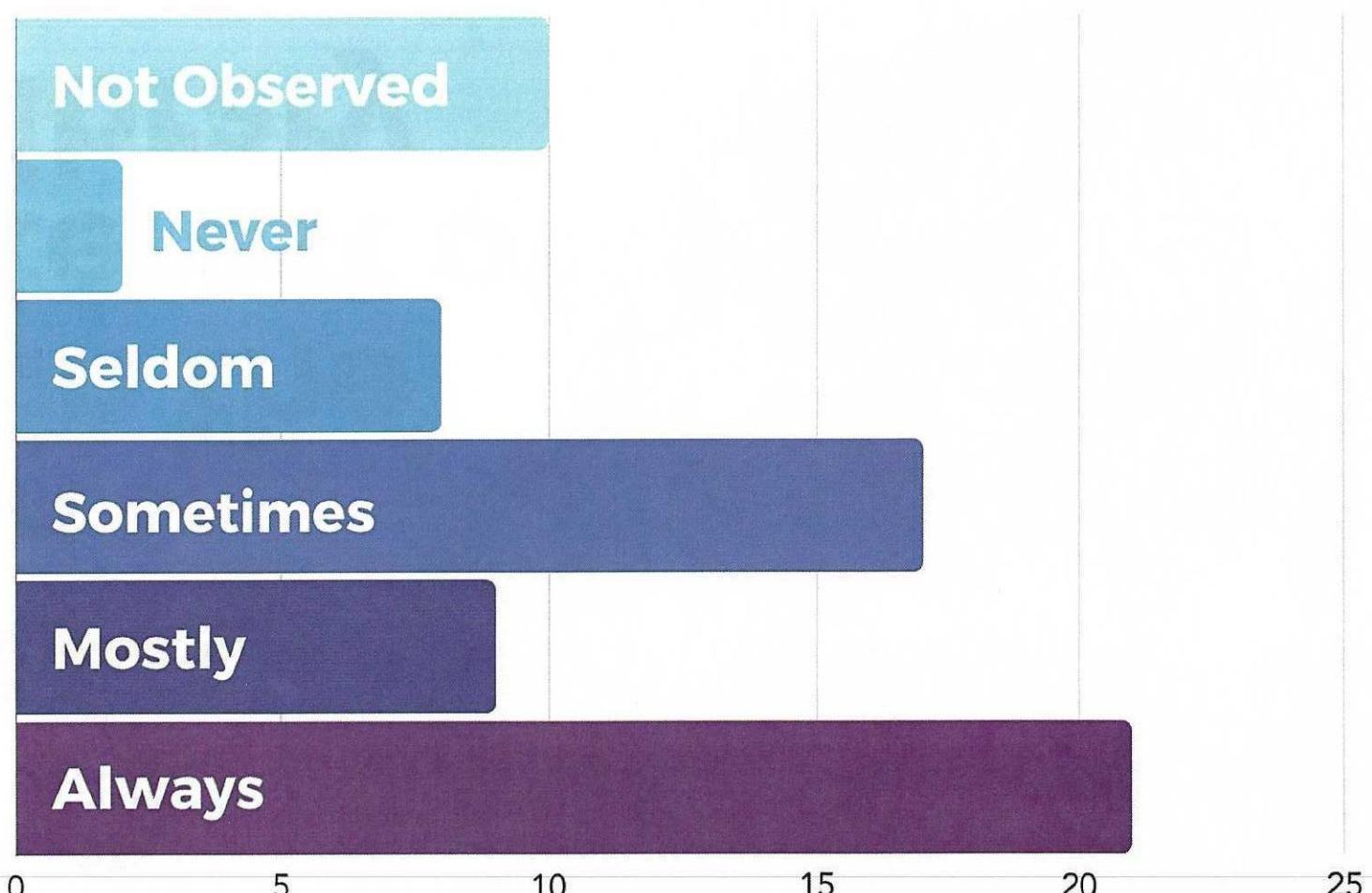




## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

8.1  
Is Visible, With Positive Presence

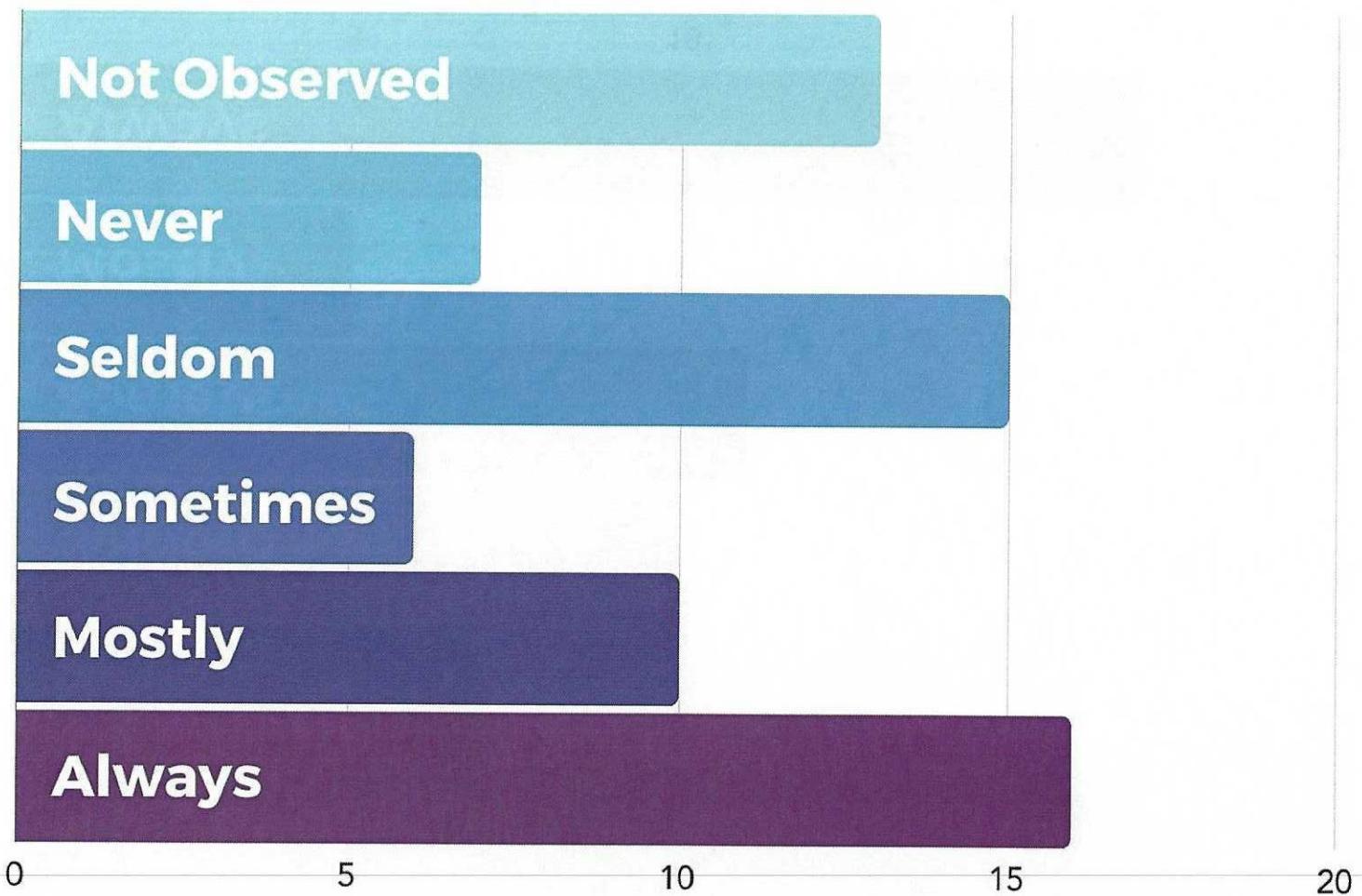




## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

8.2  
Is Highly Ethical and Professional

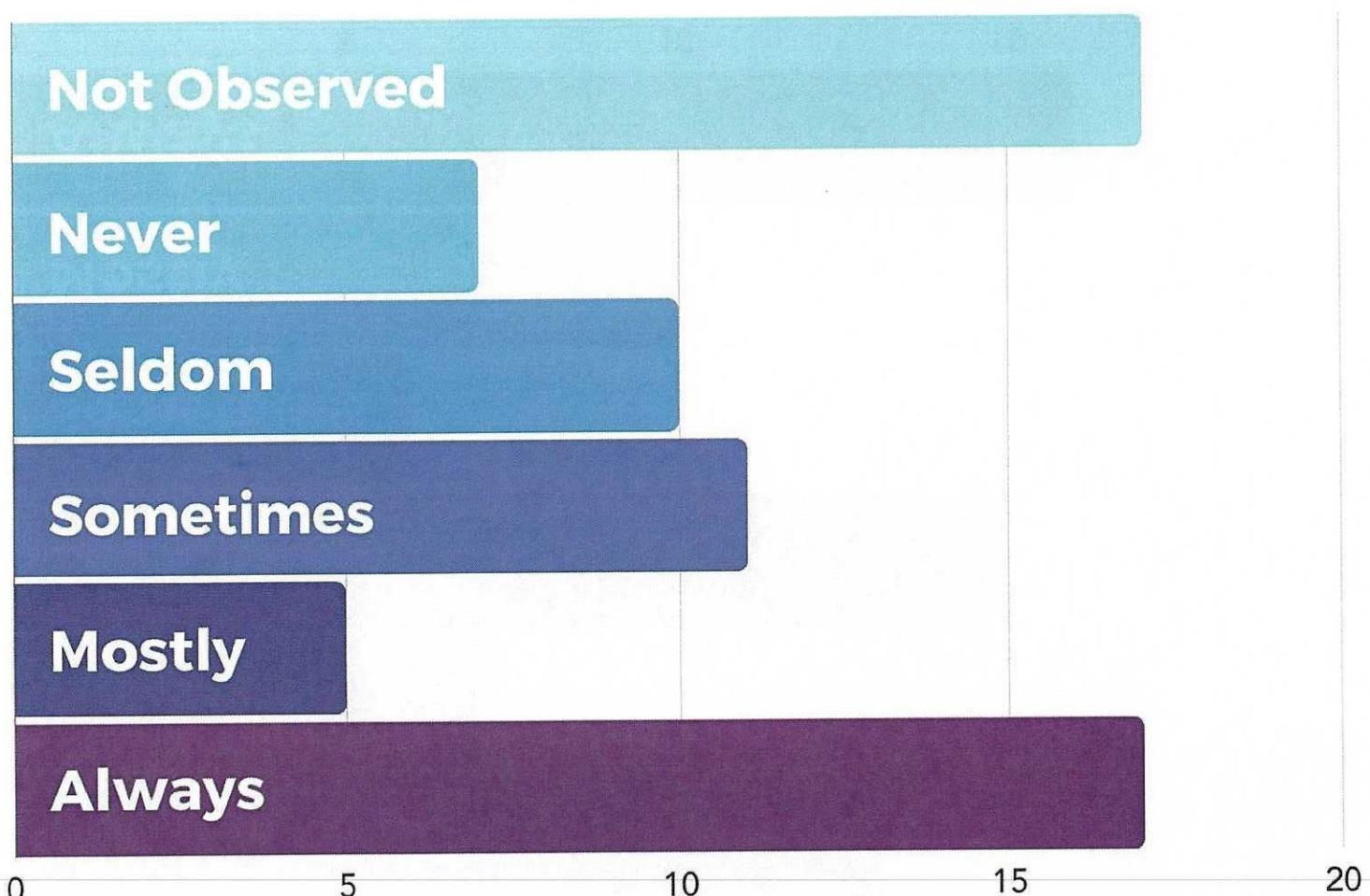




## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

8.3  
Is an Effective Team Member

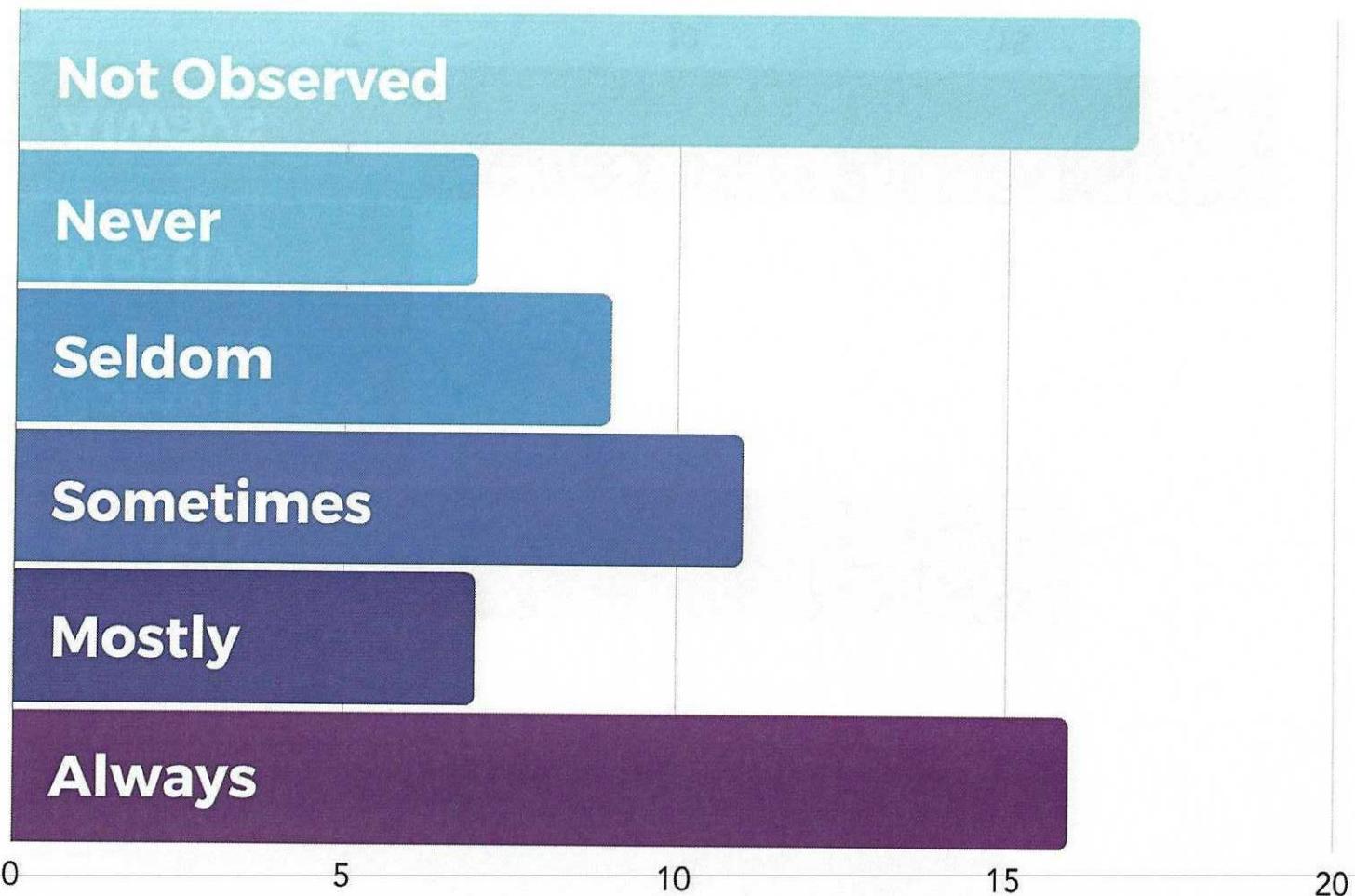




## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

8.4  
Instills Effective Team Membership In Others

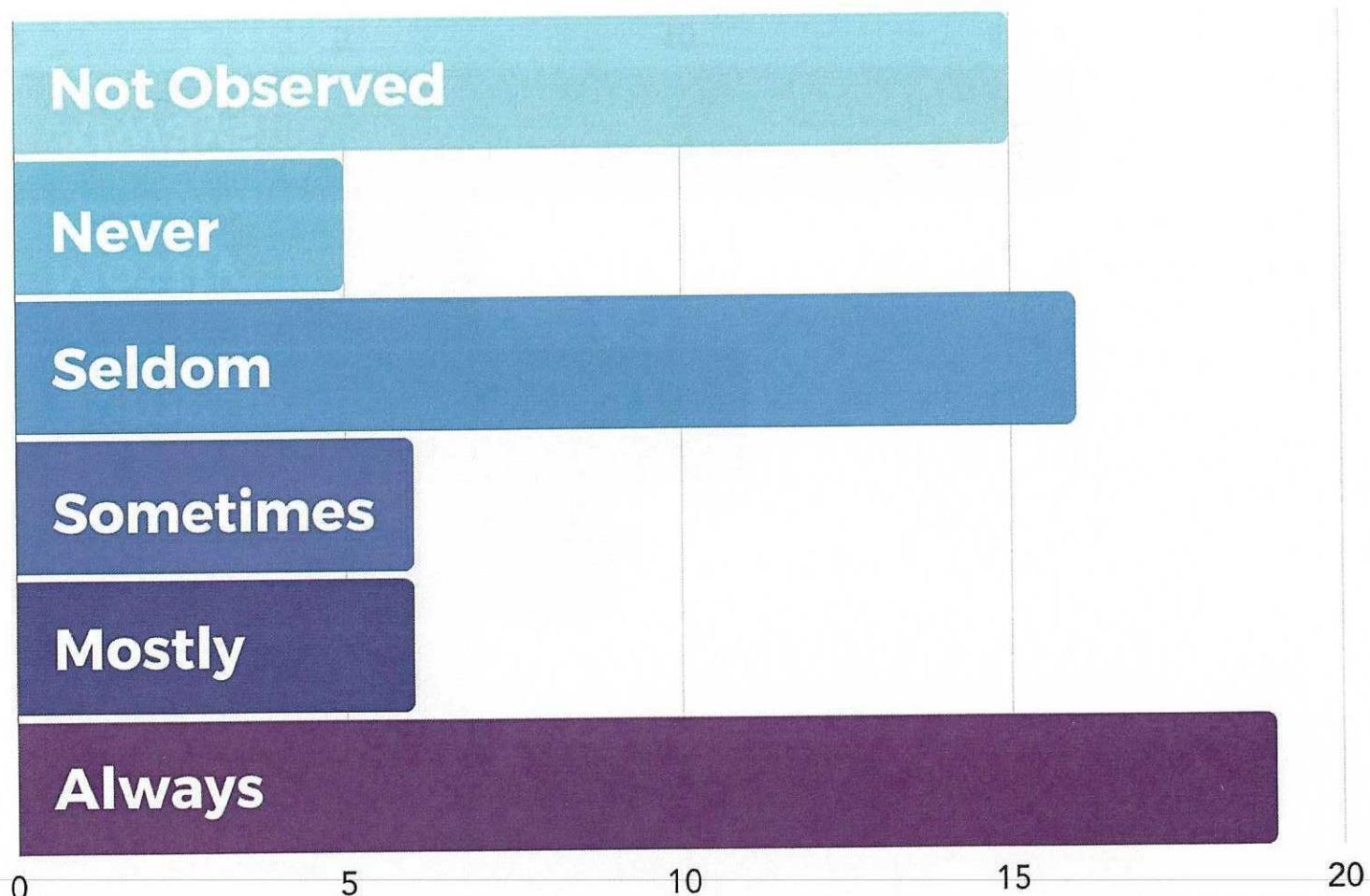




## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

8.5  
Models Collaboration



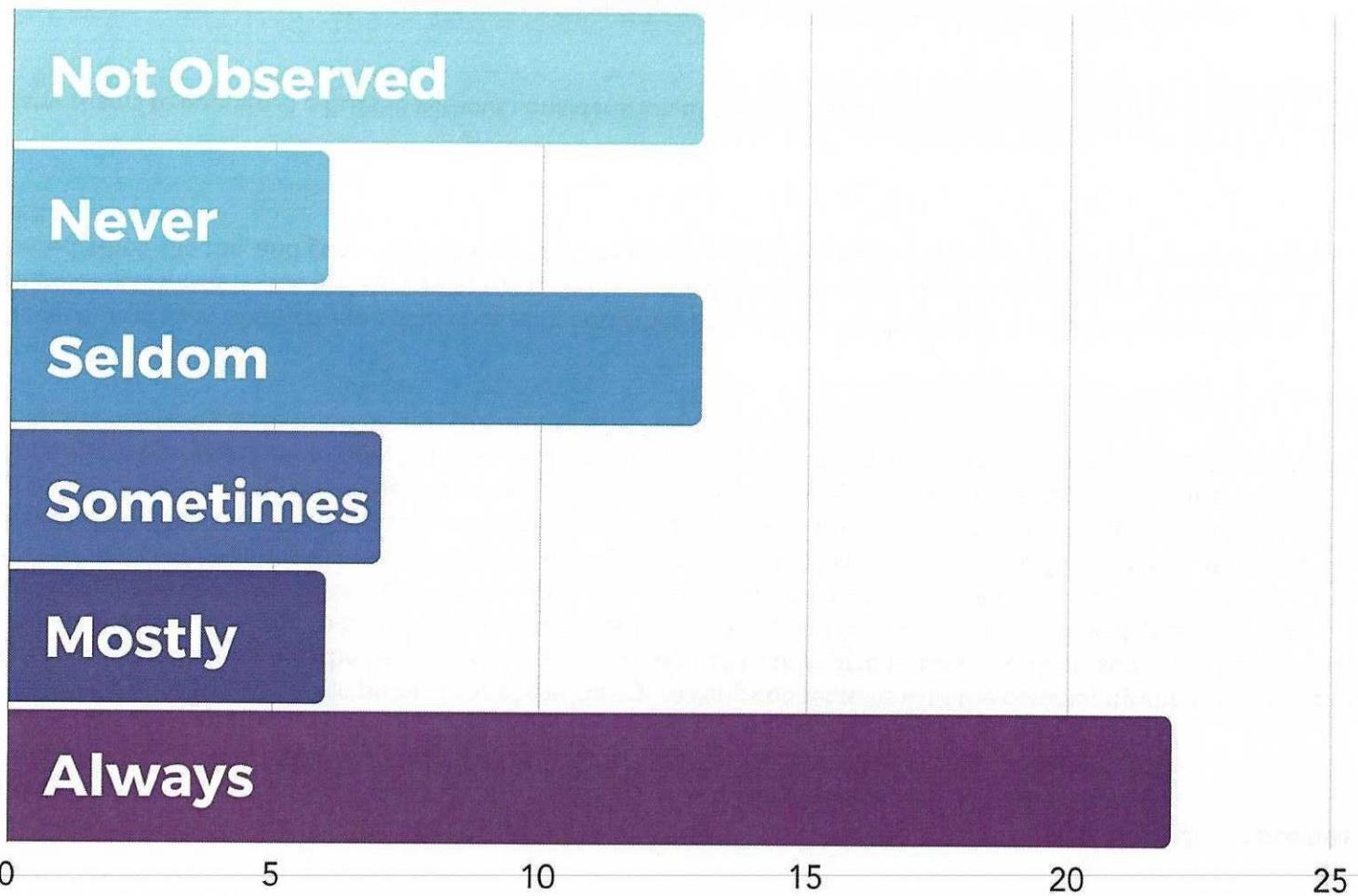


## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

8.6

Gets Involved In Making Things Better in the Library and Community





## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

#### Comments

10/10 all around the board. Knocking it out of the park. Third sports analogy.

A collaborative leader who works earnestly for the good of the community. She is highly ethical and radiates positive energy

A library director should be the public face of the library, making connections with the community and building up the staff to achieve and provide the best possible customer service to the patrons. Leslie has instead stymied efforts to grow, to offer services, and to be forthcoming with the public. She plays favorites to an extreme degree. She has planted feelings of mistrust that have broken up longtime friendships amongst staff and have driven multiple professional staff to quit, and created factions amongst the staff. Many current valued staff members are looking elsewhere for jobs, because they can't stand the negative and cruel atmosphere that Leslie has developed. I personally am so sad that the valued team and organization I love is being warped and damaged. And all of this has happened in one year. I ask of you, TCPL board, to please open your eyes to the terrible situation the library is in and replace Leslie with a different director. Our library's fate depends on your oversight.

Above all, and even when others could not see it, Leslie has had a vision for the library and has been steadfast in progressing towards it. She makes a point to be visible in the library whenever she can, she helps in all departments as needed/when she can, and generally shows great care as a leader to be present and engaged in all aspects of library work.

Again, seems to operate in a bubble without consideration of a system approach

Committees, collaboration with foundation and friends and community organizations—all Leslie's strengths.

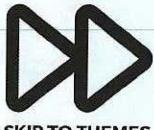




## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

### Comments



SKIP TO THEMES

Again, I think her goals for the library are reasonable and make sense and she is thinking about the best end goals for the organization. It's the process of getting there that sometimes feels fraught.

She's extremely positive and clearly wants to bring a lot of fun and collaboration to the organization. I have seen so much more collaboration happen in the last year than we are used to. It's great. Our new leadership team has been wonderful. It is clear that she is helping people learn better leadership and professional skills and has high expectations of all staff. It's been awesome to see so much growth and development, truly.

In general, I think TCPL really needed someone with this level of energy and excitement. She is absolutely moving us forward, mostly in the right direction. She has held people accountable for their actions, which has caused a bit of staff turnover but it's been a better environment for most staff members BECAUSE people are expected to act professionally and appropriately. I'm much happier working here now than I have been in a long time and I feel like I have a great future here and the library will soon hit its stride and the community will start to feel the positive changes. The future really is bright.

However, I do think she would do well to think about the appearance of favoritism and bullying, and whether she is creating an environment where ALL staff can truly express their needs and desires and are valued, regardless of their personalities.

Again, Leslie is extremely charismatic and manages to charm most people on first meeting. It's very painful to those of us who care about the library to watch her out in the community, spreading misinformation and claiming to be the face of an institution that actually she's dismantling from inside. She is extremely unethical (displaying blatant favoritism, violating civil service rules in hiring, demoting and even firing staff members over invented or highly misrepresented charges - frankly, she's a lawsuit waiting to happen to the library) and often highly unprofessional in her communications with staff. Not to mention installing her husband on the Foundation Board and turning members of the Library Board - which is meant to be her supervisor - into her close buddies and thus of course her biggest cheerleaders. It has been devastating to watch her take apart, piece by piece, what this library used to stand for.



## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

## Comments

Again, there's a stark difference between how she treats those who believe in everything she does, and those who have questions and suggestions for doing things differently or wanting to seek compromise.

As stated Leslie has no interest in collaboration or advancing library services. She seems to be reducing access, reducing staff and collections, and alienating the community in general.

From what I have seen, Leslie operates from a genuine place of wanting to improve library practices and procedures and continuously develop library services for the best interest of the community. I have not observed how she works with her executive team or models collaboration within that team.

I do feel she really cares about the library in the community

I do not feel Ms. Tabor is good for the TCPL staff or community. Yes, some changes needed to be made, and yes, there were some personnel issues that began well before Ms. Tabor's arrival which were concluded after she came. And obviously libraries are used to having to face some feedback from disgruntled patrons—it's simply part of the job. However, I strongly believe that Ms. Tabor does not like or respect Ithaca and does not like or respect TCPL staff, and in fact wants to make what she considers bold moves in order to bolster her resume for the next job. TCPL's greatest strengths are its supportive community and dedicated staff; Ms. Tabor's actions are putting both in jeopardy. I've worked many places and had many different kinds of bosses. I've been at TPCL for a long time and have witnessed and felt the struggles over the last few years especially during COVID and during the director searches. The current culture of incivility, bullying, and disrespect is unlike anything I've ever seen. Longtime friendships and work partnerships have broken up; dedicated professionals have become disillusioned; staff morale is at an all time low. I urge the TCPL Board to conduct a thorough investigation into Ms. Tabor's tenure and make sure to seek input from all staff, not just Ms. Tabor herself and a few favored individuals.



SKIP TO THEMES



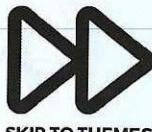
## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

### Comments

I have never seen, let alone met or been in a position to form an opinion, of the library director. However, I am a long-term patron. I like the trajectory of changes over recent years. A welcoming, instead of scary, security attendant, no fees, I was allowed to replace a book eaten by my puppy with one of equal condition instead of being charged a punitive fee, the online hold system with interlibrary loan is terrific, and the move to make hold pickup self serve is great, a book missing from your stacks was hunted down by your staff and held for me recently, and I have attended lots of events in the meeting rooms. [REDACTED] helped me learn to use the glass etching machine in the maker space to make unique gifts. The library is always quiet and orderly. I saw the security person handling a disorderly person recently. He was smiling and chatty and kind to her and because he handled the situation with sensitivity, it did not turn into an unpleasant incident. I have picked up new books chosen by staff and old books and movies placed in display locations by staff and have never been disappointed by their suggestions. Some long-term staff have made careers at the library, and they seem quite contented. No one library director can claim credit for all this, but we seem to have a good hand at the tiller, as all recent changes have been good ones.

I have strong concerns about the current Library Director being the best leader for TCPL. Again, without adequate transparency it is impossible to know how much is staff and/or the Board of Trustees. My understanding is that the Director is the driver. I understand that there are varying opinions and some people view the changes in a different light. I didn't think there was such a problem with the library before the current Library Director. I love that the library is about more than books, however I believe that books, physical, paper books should be the focus. I think the makerspace is awesome and I don't feel that takes anything away from the collections, it just adds. If I want to use the makerspace I know where to go and if I want to read a book with my child or play a board game I know where to do that. I am of an opinion that there are ample screens in our lives and especially our children's. When I have interacted with the Library Director I have not felt that interaction to be genuine, while there are many librarians and other staff over the years who I do feel are genuine and authentically working to foster community engagement.



SKIP TO THEMES

I honestly can't say enough about TCPL and how amazing the facility is. My only critique would be that I wish they had more events that working moms could take their kids too but otherwise it's amazing.



## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

## Comments

Decisions surrounding collections and treatment of staff have been areas where Leslie's lack of professionalism and ethical standards have been most apparent.

Thousands of books were put in the dumpster and "recycled" (which is impossible given that they had plastic covers on them and then were hidden in black plastic bags when the public started to question) These books were routinely chosen for deletion without looking at any circulation statistics to see if they were something the public desires. Public librarians are trained to meet the needs of the public and the books belong to the public. She claimed we'd just reorder titles but librarians in charge of the sections were frequently not given a chance to view what was being trashed to consider whether they should be reordered. Also the amount of money it would take to reorder all of those titles still desired would cost millions and millions of dollars. At last count, over 40% of the collection has been weeded. That's at least 92,000 books.

I have also overheard Leslie putting down other staff, calling them names like "babies". She has created an environment that is very divisive where people are either showered with attention and praise if they don't question or raise concerns while those who do question and raise concerns are aren't treated positively. Due to this, staff have become afraid to ask questions and raise concerns. Morale for a majority of the staff is quite low.

We have an "Accolades" chat thread of our Microsoft Teams account. It's so clear that Leslie routinely praises a certain group of staff while others' accomplishments are rarely if ever complimented. There is also a dynamic of some staff getting together with her at parties and other get togethers routinely, leaving others out. This has created an environment of "us" versus "them" which is heartbreakingly witness.

I'm incredibly saddened by the state of our beloved library after this year. I fear the damage will live on for years.

I played a lot of sports as a kid. You want to have a captain (or coach) who wants to be the best and believes you can be the best. Leslie is that captain. We are a team and she is leading TCPL into the future.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 8

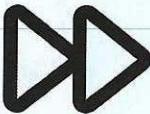
# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

## Comments

I think Leslie's collaboration with staff has been difficult to truly judge. Some staff members have been accustomed to having decisions largely made for them by department heads and the director and have become passive as a result. This has led to committees not necessarily creating actionable suggestions or not coming up with solutions to challenges. In those cases she has often stepped in and made decisions.

I used to spend a lot of time in the library and haven't as much recently. I haven't met the director and have no way to know exactly how she has been running the library, other than what I hear from folks who work there, and from friends who are more vocal with the director about changes they don't agree with.

Is visible when required or she is enthusiastic about what she has been requested to do. Gives a good "general" appearance and presentation in formal settings, but can come across as not knowledgeable because when questioned she does not know specifics or information requested. Is highly unethical. Inappropriately texts and shares information with certain staff, the Foundation Director, and community members. Dresses and speaks in an unprofessional and sometimes offensive manner. Makes personal comments on people's appearances and lives. Uses phrases such as "not my Yob" or "get off the cross - you've been on it too long". Talks about her "Hello Kitty" stickers and infatuation with stars like Adam Driver. Sometimes acts like an overgrown teenager. Was deliberately deceptive to public and board on weeding numbers. Does not like hearing no. When told not to do or pursue something, introduces it in another way and hopes it is not noticed. Hires friends and promotes favored employees and does not maintain an appropriate professional distance with employees. Actively promotes friends and relatives for appointment to Library and Foundation board. Acts in the best interest of herself and her goals. The Director has not established a strong community presence and I have the impression this is a low priority for her. Dominates teams and is very controlling but definitely accomplishes her goals. Does not understand how to collaborate, tends to give orders and tell people how they should think. Does not understand how to lead and encourage/train others to assume leadership roles. Her idea of team leadership seems to be having pizza parties and ice cream.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 8

### Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

#### Comments

I've never experienced a TCPL director that is so focused internally and not externally before. Leslie makes the common statement that she needs to get her house in order before going out into the community. Yet the role of the TCPL director has historically been one to be out in the community, meeting with community groups and donors. She tries to be involved in all aspects internally with TCPL, which isn't the role of the director as much when you get to a library that size.

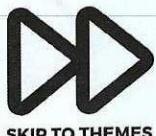
I've also never experienced such unprofessional behavior in a TCPL director. From talking about staff personally, to focusing on a small group of staff who are her supporters and downright ignoring some staff members, to talking disrespectfully about colleagues, legislators and others in conversation, I continue to be perplexed by Leslie's unprofessionalism. Is it ethical or professional to go out drinking with library staff and the TCPL Board President at local bars, which was done on more than one occasion? This is beyond coachable in my opinion, and is a detriment to the library.

Is it ethical for the TCPL Director's husband to be on the TCPL Foundation Board of Trustees? Is he excusing himself from funding votes that could be viewed as financially benefitting his wife's employment? Is it ethical for a TCPL staff member to be on the TCPL Foundation Board of Trustees? Is she excusing herself from funding votes that could be viewed as financially benefitting her employment? Is it ethical that the husband of a TCPL Foundation Board of Trustees member was just voted onto the TCPL Board of Trustees during the December board meeting at Leslie's recommendation? Why is no one from either board of trustees questioning this???

I am hopeful that having an outside consultant administer this survey and give the responses to the board of trustees will show the board of trustees what is truly happening at this library.

It would be good to know what exactly the interests of the Library are?

Leslie has actively looked for ways to build collaborative partnerships that help to better both the library and the community.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

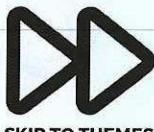
### Comments

Leslie consistently discusses the role of TCPL, and its staff, in terms of "In service to the community." I feel that the examples provided above help to demonstrate that she is acting in the best interest of the library. I also feel that previous library administration has enabled a culture of favoritism that had often resulted in the creation of cliques and, in some cases, acts of bullying of staff who were not considered to be favorites. I feel that Leslie was able to identify this culture very early on in her tenure and has worked hard on eliminating this behavior. One way she has approached this is by taking a generalist approach to staff responsibilities, such as empowering staff to waive patron fees or assist patrons with checkout at any desk, as well as reminding all staff members that anyone can shelve books during a break in their schedule (no more book cart backlog!) By helping the staff understand that we are all equally capable of completing certain tasks, it has benefited the overall patron experience by making library materials, and basic services, easily accessible. As I mentioned above, I'm thrilled to have Leslie as TCPL's director and am excited to see what the future will bring.

Leslie has been an amazing advocate for the library and we have seen the power of her enthusiasm and leadership in our highly successful fundraising this year. She is smart and engaging yet also always honest about the challenges. She has left us and our donors with an exciting vision for the future and the beginnings of a road map on what it will take to get there. It has been a pleasure to work with her! She is always willing to join in and be a part of whatever we are doing. We all feel much more included in turn and that has helped us become better and more effective advocates for the work and needs of the library.

Leslie has great vision and is incredibly motivated. She isn't selfish, though; she encourages us all to move TCPL forward, to have our own ideas and projects, to work towards a greater, more successful public resource. It is a truly satisfying and exciting place to work. I enjoy seeing Leslie walking through the library, chatting and laughing with people. I feel like what I do matters and is appreciated.

Leslie is a real team player who "gets it" with respect to working collaboratively with others. She is supportive of her team.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

### Comments

Leslie is a director who is acting the part, saying the right things, pacifying those who need pacifying and getting the "job" done. But she is not serving the long term goals and mission of TCPL, the Ithaca community or the FLLS system as a whole.

Leslie is participating in Leadership Tompkins and is also working toward dissolving the library walls so make us more relevant to the community and community needs. She is very professional and often checks in on staff working on the floor, and holds standing meetings with all staff as well as with smaller teams and committees. I am inspired by Leslie's leadership and happy to be part of the TCPL team and look forward to working with her in 2024 and beyond.

Leslie radiates positivity while walking the floor of the library. She engages with staff and patrons and creates a welcoming atmosphere. I hope that she can engage more with the Ithaca community moving forward.

Now that Leslie's got her feet under her, we need to get her out in the community. The Foundation is helping to facilitate this, scheduling what is essentially a community tour for her, reaching as much of our patron base as possible. Regular communications tools like a weekly podcast with the Library Director for example, are necessary to keep visibility high. There needs to be far more in the Library's strategic communications plan than just a monthly e-newsletter and social media. When people meet Leslie, they are inevitably wowed. I have watched her handle difficult people with skill and tact- she reads people exceptionally well and that is not a talent everyone has. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious and we need to show more of that to the public going forward. The fact that her brightness and energy are supported by a strong commitment to library principles and an impressive depth of knowledge makes Leslie exactly the Director TCPL needs in this phase to stay relevant, valued, and growing.

Right now there is a loud conversation happening at the reference desk. I shall be leaving soon. Cannot take it anymore!!!



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

### Comments

Overall, I'm very disappointed in the direction of TCPL. As a patron who has enjoyed the library more before Leslie's presence, I am finding it a more stressful experience to bring my children there because of the junk-food choices of literature, the decrease in the number of books, and the introduction of more-addicting technology. I have to be the "bad parent" to say no to my children because I want them to learn to love READING. It is very hard to say no to a toddler playing on the computer because she throws a tantrum. I basically need to decide whether I'd rather have a crying kid or a kid I constantly need to manage who is trying to pull the mouse and bang on the keyboard. I can't as easily read or look for books with my older kids. My older kids also get jealous when they see other kids not picking out books but playing Mario Kart. I need to be the "bad parent" who refocuses them on books.

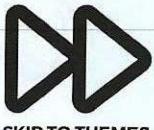
Parents want to GET AWAY from the junk of this modern world and go to a library that inspires awe, wonder, and the desire to learn something interesting.

Overall, Leslie can learn a lot from the Southworth library by decreasing the junk technology, introducing imaginative play (puppet shows, stuffed animals of exotic kinds, creative/building toys, more human-to-human board games, etc.), and reintroducing high-quality classic books into the system. She can also stop ousting people who don't agree with her strict interpretation of diversity, equity, and inclusion. She should understand that the people who arrive at the above conclusions are actually trying to PROMOTE DEI in a way that equalizes opportunity for all, not further increase the gap.

I will continue to drive the far distance to take my kids to Southworth unless things change at TCPL.

Retaining Leslie Tabor in her position after the last round of reviews in the summer was a grave error which reflects very poorly on the current board. The work environment is unbearable for the majority of staff. Whoever is behind this decision making owes the community and the staff of the library an explanation, apology, and reparations.

Leslie Tabor is perhaps the most unprofessional librarian I have ever met. I cannot emphasize enough what a disaster her directorship has been for the library.



SKIP TO THEMES



## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

## Comments

She had even been heard by several people in a meeting that she don't like kids.  
I have had several patrons tell me she is unapproachable.  
Just look at how many employees have left on the past year. That should speak volumes.

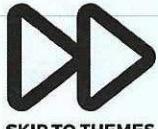
She isn't ethical in the way that she concealed disposal of books from the public. She isn't an effective team member because she gives the impression that all our work before she came was wrong and subpar, so it makes it difficult to get on board with her with anything. I don't believe she makes things better in the library and community. She's created an atmosphere of fear and mistrust among employees at the library and that is not making things better.

She's very charismatic and speaks well to crowds, which was evident in her interview. At this point though she doesn't feel very genuine to me, when I know she will criticize people to their faces in private and then talk about how much she appreciates them in public. It's hard to know what she really thinks, but I suspect it doesn't necessarily match what she says when there's an audience. I don't think she's trying to harm the library or community as a whole so the overall outcomes might be good, and for the people who like her it seems to be great, but I don't particularly trust her.

So many overarching changes at a library that she barely knows and has no interest in getting to know and understand our diverse community, especially the academic aspects of it. Only values voices that are in alignment with hers.

The library is a better workplace now and a better community hub than it was when I started, before Leslie was the director. And Leslie has jumped on desk, shelved books, checked books in, and generally gotten down in the trenches of customer service when we've needed her. I trust her with the future of TCPL.

The library is worse than it was a year ago. I have complete confidence the same will be true next year. Luckily, there are still some other decent libraries in Tompkins County.



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## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

## Comments

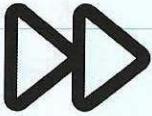
Tompkins County is lucky to have a director with energy and a positive attitude. Leadership in the library has been lacking for several years, projects were stalled out, and it takes energy and commitment to get things back on track. Leslie is that director that will get things done.

When Tabor started at TCPL, she announced her presence and asserted her authority by pushing in chairs, shelving books, attending departmental meetings, pulling books out of the collection to withdraw, etc. but that has diminished. I see her less out and about the library except sometimes at the circulation desk.

Her behavior exhibits a lack of ethics and professionalism. Favoritism shown to certain staff is obvious in terms of who she regularly sits next to and literally bumps shoulders with as if they are best friends. She encourages immaturity and rivalry between and among staff and patrons as well - either you're pro-Leslie or not - or so it seems. Instead of trying to heal the community's attitude toward TCPL and the mood within the Library, she's encouraged spying on others and reporting what has been said negatively about what's going on back to her.

With Leslie it feels like nothing is ever as it seems and there's always something more happening behind closed doors. I don't believe she has acted ethically with the RFID project and discarding materials. If you don't fit into her idea of a generalist or apart of her three-legged stool, there's no chance for collaboration. I have yet to see how she's engaging with our community or even attempting to make a positive impact. If it's not about her then it won't be considered or be seen as negative or not worth library time. I do not appreciate leaders who hide behind fake positivity and uses change to micromanage staff.

Yep, Leslie is often downstairs, constantly throwing us celebrations big and small, always chatty and warm with patrons, always inviting people (patrons, staff, stakeholders) to coffee, being authentic, warm, vulnerable, positive. The bang for your buck that you get from her is pretty crazy in terms of emotional labor in addition to traditional labor. Very ethical and pragmatic, follows the process, consults with the library lawyer and HR experts to get things right. Tries to simplify processes so that there's less room for error, especially with budgets! I could go on and on.. She's fantastic and we're so. damn. lucky. to. have. her.



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## PART 8

# Acts in the Best Interest of the Library

### Common Themes

Click each theme to review the analysis



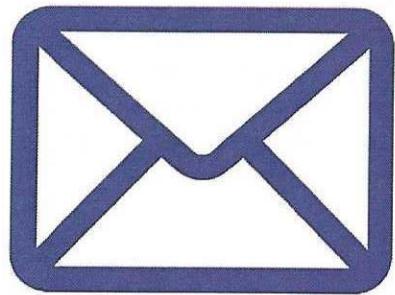
#### Positive Themes

- 1. Ms. Tabor's Vision and Leadership:** Some feedback highlights Ms. Tabor's vision for the library, her positive energy, and her commitment to moving the library forward.
- 2. Collaboration and Team Building:** Ms. Tabor is credited with fostering collaboration, team growth, and professional development among staff.
- 3. Energy and Enthusiasm:** Many respondents mention Ms. Tabor's energy, enthusiasm, and positive attitude.
- 4. Engagement with the Community:** Some feedback notes Ms. Tabor's engagement with the community, building partnerships, and fundraising efforts.

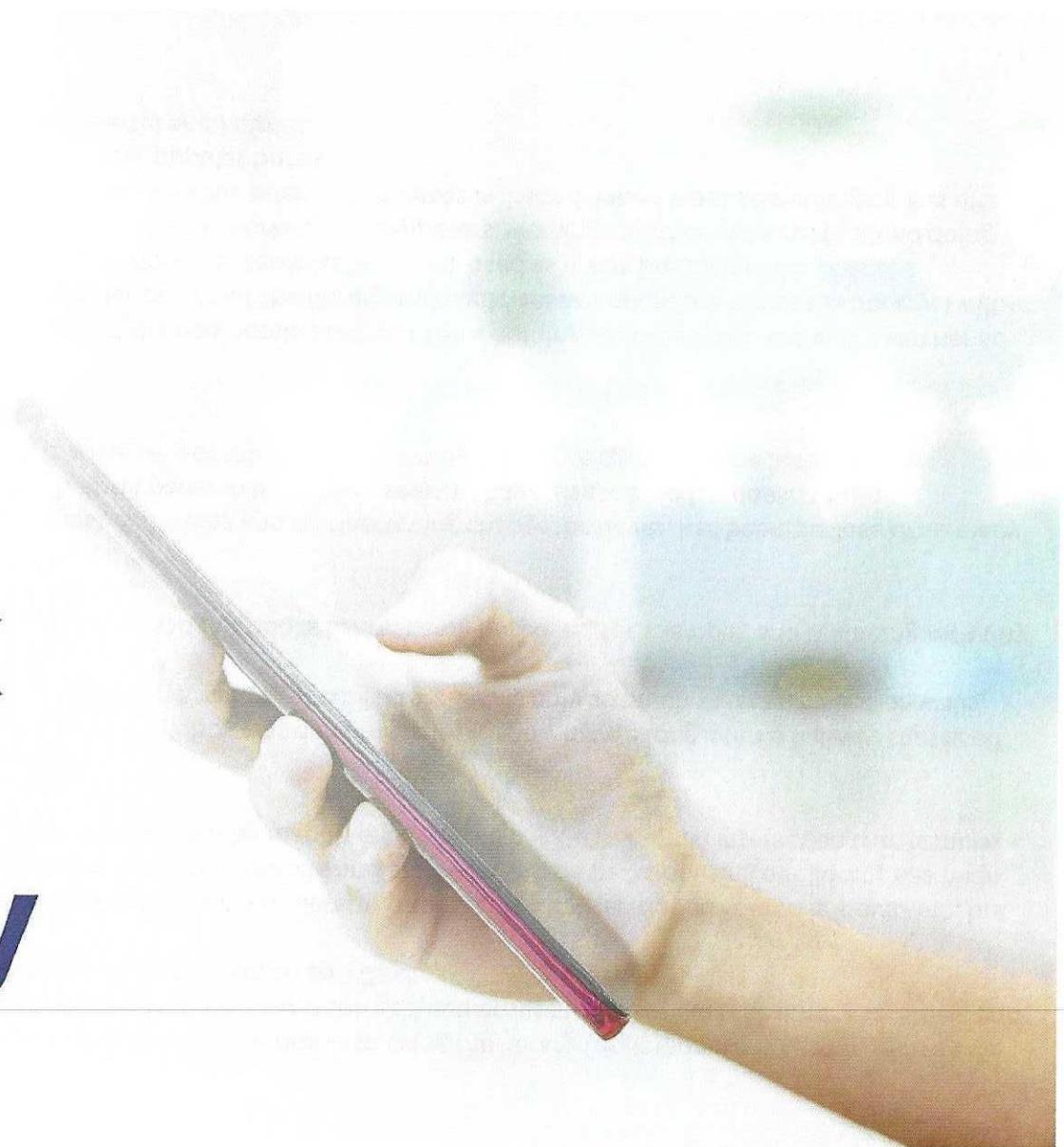
#### Negative Themes

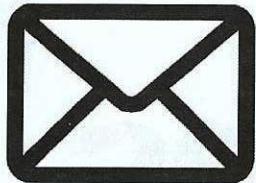
- 1. Ethical Concerns:** Several respondents express concerns about Ms. Tabor's ethics, including favoritism, lack of transparency, and disposal of books without public knowledge.
- 2. Negative Atmosphere:** Many respondents mention that Ms. Tabor's leadership has created a negative and divisive atmosphere among staff, leading to low morale and staff turnover.
- 3. Lack of Collaboration:** Some respondents feel that Ms. Tabor does not collaborate effectively, and her decisions can be unilateral.
- 4. Perception of Insincerity:** A few respondents suggest that Ms. Tabor may not be genuine or transparent in her actions, particularly in public versus private settings.





**Part 9:**  
**Feedback**  
**Emailed**  
**Separately**





## PART 9

### Feedback Emailed Separately From Form

#### Comments

I have been a patron of the TCPL since the 1970's. In addition to using the library for personal enjoyment, I have been a volunteer, taught evening ESL classes, and counseled and tutored numerous students using the library facilities, and participated in countless community activities sponsored by TCPL.

Some of the recent changes have raised my concern. I understand that technological modernization is inevitable, but can be detrimental to personal interaction between patrons and staff - one of the perks of using our library has been this communication. It may be quicker to check-out by machine, but it also negates a human interaction that is more and more lacking in our lives.

In my opinion, taking out the showcases in the lobby was a big mistake. We now have a long, sterile hallway that used to inform, educate, humor, awe the public with a variety of subjects -there is only so much that can be put on walls.

Removing tables, that allowed patrons to spread out books for research purposes, for example, and replacing with tiny side tables next to a chair was short-sighted.

These are the "small" concerns. The most disturbing and disheartening change, however, has been the loss of so many long-term staff - intelligent, friendly, helpful personnel that just seem to have disappeared. It doesn't seem coincidental, and although I don't know the why of this, it seems connected to the agenda of the library's new direction. It's very sad.

Hi, I was asked to complete a survey about the new administrator. I know nothing about her, haven't ever seen her so cannot answer the questions. I am a regular patron of the library and could answer questions about the library. I will state a few of my observations. The library does not seem to be as well used as it was pre pandemic. There used to be lots of people in the central area; working on computers, working together at tables or alone doing research as well as milling about the stacks. Also our selection of books is limited. When I look something up it is often not available at our library, particularly new, popular books.

I appreciate the staff who are always cheerful and helpful.

