

November 5, 2007

Kathleen Oest  
Employee Relations Specialist  
Washington Public Employees Association  
140 Percival St. NW  
Olympia, WA 98502

RE: Colleen Cooper v. Pierce College  
Allocation Review No. ALLO-06-034

Dear Ms. Oest:

The Director's review of Pierce College's (Pierce) allocation determination of Colleen Cooper's position has been completed. The review was based on written documentation and on information provided during the October 25, 2007 Director's review meeting. Present at the Director's review meeting were you and Ms. Cooper. By telephone, Jan Bucholtz, Vice President for Human Resources; Deena Forsythe, Human Resource Employment Specialist; and Terri Mitchell, Cashier Supervisor, were present on behalf of Pierce College.

**Background**

Ms. Cooper requested reallocation of her Cashier II position to the Fiscal Technician III classification. By letter dated October 26, 2006, Pierce determined that Ms. Cooper's position was properly allocated and denied her request. On November 20, 2006, Ms. Cooper requested a Director's review of Pierce's determination.

During the Director's review meeting, I noted that some of exhibits provided by Ms. Cooper were dated after her request for reallocation and therefore, were outside of the six month period relevant to the review of her position. I indicated that even though those documents were outside the time frame of this review, they were included as part of the record of this case, and I would give them the appropriate weight. I also noted that TAB 5 of Ms. Cooper's exhibits appeared to include a number of duplicate copies of information.

**Summary of Ms. Cooper's Perspective**

At the time of her request for reallocation, Ms. Cooper asserted that she had been performing duties at the Fiscal Technician III level for well over a year. Ms. Cooper argues that even though she spends a majority of her time working at the cashier window at Pierce College's Puyallup

branch campus, she is not performing cashiering duties a majority of the time. Ms. Cooper contends that she uses independent judgment to solve fiscal problems in the Cashiering Department at the Puyallup branch. She asserts that she receives student funds such as vouchers, scholarships, and checks; setup accounts; processes information, including applying the appropriate codes and entering the information into the Financial Management System (FMS); researches and resolves discrepancies; and maintains and reconciles fiscal records, cash boxes and petty cash funds. Ms. Cooper contends that the screens she accesses to process information are not cashier screens but are the same screens utilized by fiscal staff at Pierce College's Fort Steilacoom location. Ms. Cooper contends that she works independently and is provided no oversight by fiscal staff at the Puyallup branch. Ms. Cooper asserts that her level of independence and the fiscal nature of her duties and responsibilities fit within the Fiscal Technician III classification.

### **Summary of Pierce College's Reasoning**

Pierce acknowledges that some of Ms. Cooper's duties fit within the Fiscal Technician classifications, but asserts that the majority of her duties fit within the Cashier II classification. Pierce agrees that Ms. Cooper does the initial intake and processing tasks for funds received at the cashier window. However, for tuition payments, scholarships and invoices, Pierce contends that Ms. Cooper sends the original documents to fiscal staff at the Fort Steilacoom location for review and completion. Pierce asserts that Ms. Cooper does not make fiscal determinations and does not interpret and apply a variety of rules or procedures in specialized fiscal functions as required for allocation to the Fiscal Technician III level. Pierce further contends that as the only full time Cashier at the Puyallup branch, the majority of Ms. Cooper's work falls within the Cashier II classification.

### **Director's Determination**

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file and the information Ms. Cooper and Pierce provided during the Director's review meeting. In addition to the Cashier II and Fiscal Technician III classifications, I considered the Cashier I and Fiscal Technician II classification. Based on my review of the documents, the information provided during the review meeting, the available classifications, and my analysis of Ms. Cooper's overall assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude that her position is properly allocated to the Cashier II classification.

### **Rationale for Determination**

Ms. Cooper is the only full time Cashier at the Puyallup branch campus. She provides support to many areas including customer accounts, scholarships and cashiering. The majority of her work includes entering cashiering transactions into the FMS, creating accounts if needed, reconciling accounts, entering account adjustments such as voids, providing support to cashiering and other departments, and performing cashier and customer service activities. In addition, Ms. Cooper performs word processing, creates forms, and creates and uses spreadsheets; trains part-time cashiers; organizes, monitors and makes purchasing recommendations for supplies used by cashiering; participates in departmental goals and activities; and performs research and compiles information as requested by her supervisor.

The class series concept for the Fiscal Technician classifications states:

Perform or be responsible for repetitive fiscally related duties in a computerized environment. Incumbents may be assigned to one specific function or perform duties in more than one functional area, such as: Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Cashiering, Payroll, Grants and Contracts, Student Aid, Fixed Assets, Revenue, and General Accounting, or rotate from one functional area to another.

Ms. Cooper's position appears to fit within the class series concept because she performs repetitive fiscally related cashiering duties using the FMS.

The basic function for the Fiscal Technician II classification states:

Process manual or automated fiscal documents, reports and records; compute, reconcile, adjust, review, audit and enter financial and statistical data to maintain accounting, budgeting, cashiering, purchasing and payroll records and reports.

The distinguishing characteristics state: "[f]ully-qualified working level. Under general supervision, perform assigned tasks. Work is reviewed upon completion."

Ms. Cooper performs a portion of the duties encompassed by the Fiscal Technician II description. She works under general supervision, processes documents received by cashiering, enters cashiering information into the FMS, and researches and resolves discrepancies. While Ms. Cooper performs a portion of the work described by the Fiscal Technician II class, she does not process fiscal information for accounting, budgeting, purchasing and payroll. Rather she provides information to fiscal staff who perform the fiscal processing, reconciling and auditing for accounting, budgeting, purchasing and payroll. Ms. Cooper does not perform the breadth of work or the overall scope of duties encompassed by this level.

The basic function for the Fiscal Technician III classification states:

Provide fiscal support using independent judgment in the interpretation and application of a variety of rules and procedures in specialized fiscal functions, such as internal control, revolving fund maintenance control, and providing resource data for reports.

The distinguishing characteristics state: "[p]erform detailed fiscal work where independent judgment is exercised to make fiscal determinations and to solve problems that arise within work assignments."

Ms. Cooper's position does not fit within the Fiscal Technician III classification. She does not use independent judgment to interpret and apply a variety of rules and procedures in specialized fiscal functions. Rather she uses and applies a variety of processes and procedures outlined in the Puyallup Cashiering Department procedure manuals. Ms. Cooper wrote the procedures for the manuals and when she is notified of changes by her supervisor or by fiscal staff, she updates the manuals. The procedure manuals are used by staff at the Puyallup branch campus to assure that they follow the correct processes for performing cashiering functions. The manuals are not used by all Pierce College cashiers. During the Director's review meeting, Ms. Cooper stated that she does not deviate from the procedures. In addition, Ms. Cooper does not work in a specialized fiscal function

such as internal control or revolving fund maintenance control. Rather she works in the Puyallup branch campus Cashiering Department. Specialized fiscal functions are performed by fiscal staff at Pierce College's Fort Steilacoom location.

The class series concept for the Cashier classifications states:

Perform fiscally-related tasks using a manual and/or computerized system which involve receiving, distributing, transferring, and accounting for funds such as distribution of monies owed or advanced; receipt of payments by cash, checks or credit cards; and maintenance of internal and external cash flow records.

Ms. Cooper's position fits within the Cashier class series concept. She performs fiscally related tasks involving receiving, distributing, transferring and accounting for monies. She receives payments and maintains cash flow records.

The basic function for the Cashier II classification states:

Receive and disburse funds; record monetary transactions; verify daily records of receipts, consolidate cash receipts and deposits, maintain control records of receipts and disbursements; transfer funds; prepare and input data to computer.

The distinguishing characteristics state: "[u]nder general supervision, use established guidelines and exercise independent judgment in the performance of assigned tasks such as receiving and disbursing funds, preparing receipts, making adjustments to funds, maintaining records, and preparing bank deposits."

Ms. Cooper's position fits within the basic function and the distinguishing characteristics of the Cashier II classification. She receives and disburses funds, records transactions in the FMS, balances funds, maintains records of receipts and disbursement, and prepares and inputs data into spreadsheets as well as into the FMS. In addition, she works under general supervision and utilizes established procedures to perform her work.

While not allocating criteria, the typical work statements for the Cashier II class describe the majority of Ms. Cooper's work. For example, she verifies and balances cash receipts, makes and maintains reports, verifies and disburses petty cash funds, makes account adjustments, computes fees, and prepares computer input documents. Positions at the Cashier II level also perform the duties described in the Cashier I classification. The typical work statements for the Cashier I classification also describe some of Ms. Cooper's work. For example, she receives cash, checks, and credit cards for payments; issues computerized receipts; maintains records of funds received, distributed, and transferred; maintains and enforces security procedures to ensure safety of funds; balances records at the end of the work day; and prepares reports.

During the Director's review meeting, Ms. Cooper expressed concern about the lack of promotional opportunities available to her as a cashier. As indicated in Ms. Cooper's performance evaluations (Exhibit E, Tab 3), she is a valued employee at the Puyallup branch campus and her supervisor encourages her to pursue opportunities to enhance her knowledge and skills. However, the purpose of the position review process is not to award promotions to employees.

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more than one classification. However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall for the majority of the position's duties and responsibilities. See Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

While some of Ms. Cooper's duties are found in the fiscal technician classifications, the Cashier II classification best encompasses the majority of her overall duties and level of responsibility. Ms. Cooper's position is properly allocated.

#### **Appeal Rights**

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board by filing written exceptions to the Directors' determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC.

WAC 357-52-015 states that an appeal must be received in writing at the office of the Board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Directors' determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Sincerely,

Holly Platz, SPHR  
Director's Review Investigator

cc: Colleen Cooper  
Jan Bucholtz, Pierce College  
Deena Forsythe, Pierce College  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP