

February 7, 2008

RE: Tina Morefield v. Central Washington University (CWU)  
Allocation Review No. ALLO-07-001

Dear Ms. Morefield:

The Director's review of CWU's allocation determination of your position has been completed. The review was based on written documentation.

### **Background**

On October 9, 2006, CWU's Human Resources Office received a position review request for your position in Enrollment Management. The request asked that your Administrative Assistant A (AAA) position be reallocated to the Administrative Assistant B (AAB) classification. CWU conducted a review of your position and by letter dated December 8, 2006, denied the request.

On January 2, 2007, you filed a request for a Director's review.

By notice dated December 21, 2007, Karen Wilcox, Director's Review Coordinator, informed the parties that the review would be considered through written documentation. Ms. Wilcox set an exhibit deadline of January 14, 2008 for the submission of additional documentation. Both you and CWU provided additional information.

Subsequent to the request for review, your position was reallocated to the Secretary Supervisor classification, effective May 1, 2007. Then, effective October 1, 2007, you accepted a Program Manager A position with the working title of Assistant Registrar.

### **Summary of Ms. Morefield's Perspective**

In describing the duties you feel are outside of the AAA classification, you assert that:

- You work under the direct supervision of the Associate Vice President (AVP) of Enrollment Management;
- Your work is assigned by your supervisor, by the Registrar and by the Director of Admissions;
- Your work is recurring and impromptu, is performed independently, and is given both verbally and in writing;

- You prioritize your work to meet predetermined deadlines and unanticipated events;
- You perform confidential executive secretary duties regarding sensitive or confidential information in support of the AVP, the Director of Admissions, the Registrar and the Director of Enrollment Management and Planning; and
- You exercise discretion when responding to and making independent judgments regarding unexpected or urgent situations.

You contend that the duties of your position have remained the same and that CWU is now posting the position at the level of the AAB classification. You argue that in conducting the review of your position, CWU did not talk to the staff that was most familiar with your work and as a result, they were confused about the scope of your work and misapplied the criteria for allocation to the AAB classification. You assert that CWU determined that your position met the criteria for reallocation to the AAB level, yet determined that the reallocation was not warranted.

You argue that your position is unique and serves as the sole administrative support and executive secretary reporting to the head of the organization. You assert that your duties include making independent decisions related to budget, space management and support staff assignments; training others on the budgets, allocations and budget reports; representing the division in meetings and making decisions on behalf of the APV, Director of Admission and the Registrar regarding setting deadlines, dates and goals of the division; and writing and coordinating contracts for commencement activities including sound equipment, facility rental, and interpreter services.

### **Summary of CWU's reasoning**

CWU determined that the preponderance of your duties and responsibilities are of a nature, complexity and scope best described by the AAA classification. CWU asserts that while your position description reflects numerous secretarial duties, because your position also provided executive support to the AVP, allocation to an Administrative Assistant class was appropriate. CWU contends that when assessing the class specifications in their totality, your position did not meet the overall scope and level of responsibility found at the AAB level. CWU argues that during the time period under review, your position did not supervise other fulltime, civil service staff; your position was not the sole administrative support for the unit; and that while you could initiate hiring or budgetary actions, you did not have delegated authority to approve personnel actions or salaries, set hiring dates, or change budgetary plans.

CWU explains that Enrollment Management provides services for more than 4,000 students and while this meets the criteria for allocation to the AAB level, the duties you perform do not significantly meet the allocating criteria for that level. CWU describes your position as:

- Providing confidential secretarial and administrative support to the AVP and support to the Registrar and Director of Admissions in a combination of functional areas;
- Exercising limited authority to make independent decisions related to budget, space management, developing procedures and making assignments to support staff;
- Tracking and reconciling eleven budgets, informing your supervisor of budget status, exercising limited expenditure authority for office supplies, duplicating orders, bookstore

and procard purchases, and assisting in planning and coordinating the annual commencement ceremony;

- Having contacts with numerous individuals but not authorized to commit to courses of action without consulting with your supervisor or others;
- Supervising two student employees whose work constitutes less than one full-time equivalent; and
- Providing administrative support to Registrar Services and Admissions for student services and for some business services.

### **Director's Determination**

Allocation determinations are generally based on the duties and responsibilities performed by a position during the six-month period prior to the submission of a request for reallocation. Subsequent organizational changes or changes in the duties or responsibilities of a position are outside of the scope of a position review, though those changes could be the subject of a new request for review. In this case, because the review was filed on October 9, 2006, the duties and responsibilities assigned to and documented for your position during the period of April 9, 2006 through October 8, 2006 are the basis for this review.

In addition, the position description serves the same purpose as the former classification questionnaire. Both the Personnel Appeals Board and the Personnel Resources Board have held that because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities as documented in the classification questionnaire. Lawrence v. Dept of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

Therefore, my decision is based on the approved Position Description for your position that was in place on October 9, 2006, not on the subsequent descriptions of your former position.

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file including the duties and responsibilities described in your Position Description form. Based on my review of the documents, the available classifications, and my analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude that your position is best described by the Administrative Assistant A classification.

### **Rationale for Determination**

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).

Your position fits within the class series concept for the Administrative Assistant classes. The class series concept states:

Provide support to the chief administrator or head of a major organizational unit such as a school, college or major academic or administrative department in a combination of functional areas such as budget development and/or management, grant and contract proposal preparation, space planning and analysis, expenditure control, student services, executive secretarial support, office management, public relations, personnel administration, curriculum planning/analysis, records management and/or report preparation.

This series differs from the office support series in that Administrative Assistants report to the head of a major organizational unit and perform and/or coordinate administrative support functions for the entire unit, develop and establish procedures and apply policies for the unit.

Administrative Assistants differ from Administrative Services Managers because the former do not have management responsibility for a department or unit, but rather provide or oversee staff support for an administrator who has ultimate management responsibility.

Your position fits within the basic function of the Administrative Assistant classes. The basic function of the AAA and AAB classifications are identical. The basic function states: “[p]rovide staff support to the chief administrator or head of a major organizational unit such as a school, college or major academic or administrative department. Represent the administrator and/or unit's goals and interests and provide and/or coordinate functions such as budget and space management/analysis, grant and contract proposal preparation, records management, student services and/or personnel administration.”

Allocations to the AAA and AAB classes are determined based on the distinguishing characteristics of the classes. The Personnel Resources Board has found that 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).

Allocations to the Administrative Assistant classes requiring comparing the overall scope and level of work a position performs to the distinguishing characteristics of the classes. Each component of the distinguishing characteristics does not have to be met but rather the components are assessed in their totality when deciding which level best describes the position.

### **1. Scope and Impact of Position's Decision Making Authority:**

At the AAA level, “[d]elegated decision making authority is exercised in areas such as expenditure control, planning and management of administrative office space and equipment purchases, support staff assignments and report preparation.”

At the AAB level, “[d]elegated decision making authority is exercised in areas such as approval of expenditures which require changes in budgetary plans, determination of depreciation and/or fee schedules, remodeling and/or management of office, laboratory and classroom space, assignment of work to office support staff and development of procedures to facilitate adherence to institution or funding agency policies. Exercise judgment to solve unusual administrative problems consistent with the objectives and policies of the unit and university or college.”

Your position best fits with the AAA level. Your expenditure authority is limited and best described as expenditure control. You prepare reports and correspondence, address building and facility issues, monitor and purchase supplies and assist in purchasing equipment, monitor the budget and make suggestions for budget changes and forecasts, schedule meetings, and participate in the coordination of events. Your position does not have delegated decision making authority required at the AAB level.

## **2. Scope of the Position's Operational Responsibility:**

At the AAA level, “[d]evelop budget estimates, establish and ensure adherence to procedures for budget maintenance, authorize expenditures, plan/coordinate allocation of office space, analyze equipment needs and plan purchases.”

At the AAB level, “[m]onitor, control and develop budget estimates for activities funded from a variety of sources such as state, grant, contract and cost center accounts. In concert with administrator, establish short- and long-term fiscal plans and performance goals. Develop, plan and coordinate special projects such as coordinating move of facilities/office, production of annual report, community outreach and conducting surveys of major importance to the unit. Coordinate administrative standards and procedures for independent yet interrelated departmental, school or campus functions.

While you perform some duties that are at the AAB level, the preponderance of your duties best fit within the AAA level. You provide leadership in office management for support staff, but you do not establish short- and long-term fiscal plans and performance goals for the unit. You participate in the coordination of commencement activities, but you do not coordinate special projects. You independently handle a variety of interactions which require research, consultation, and interpretation of policies and procedures related to Enrollment Management.

## **3. Scope and Impact of Position's Public/Organizational Contact:**

At the AAA level, “[r]epresent the administrator/head within the campus community and provide interpretation or explanation of supervisor's policies or viewpoints. Have frequent contacts with management representatives from on and off campus through which incumbents coordinate activities and functions of the unit.”

At the AAB level, “[h]ave extensive contact with individuals such as senior management staff, administrative officers, community leaders and local, state and federal officials. Represent the administrator and/or department in meetings on and off campus and exercise delegated authority to commit to courses of action without prior supervisory approval. Employees represent the administrator in situations requiring a high level of tact and diplomacy where the effect of an error in judgement may have significant impact.”

You act as a liaison and point of contact for staff, administrators, students and faculty and you interact with state and local government agencies and the public to facilitate communication with the AVP. You exercise discretion and confidentiality in the performance of your duties. You do not exercise delegated authority on behalf of the AVP or the department at meetings requiring commitment to courses of action or represent the AVP in situations where an error in judgment may have a significant impact. Rather, you act as a liaison on your supervisor's behalf and attend meetings on behalf of the unit regarding business procedures and practices. Your position best fits the AAA level.

#### **4. Scope of Position's Supervisory Responsibility:**

At the AAA level, “[w]ith delegated authority, interview and recommend the selection of applicants, conduct training, assign and schedule work, act upon leave requests, conduct annual performance evaluations and recommend disciplinary actions.”

At the AAB level, “[w]ith delegated authority, interview and recommend the selection of applicants, conduct training, assign and schedule work, act upon leave requests, conduct annual performance evaluations and recommend disciplinary actions. Supervise support staff typically performing varied functions or services.”

At the time of your position review, your position did not fit either the AAA or the AAB level. Your position did not have supervisory responsibility for at least one full-time equivalent employee (FTE). You did provide supervision to two part-time student workers, but their total work time did not equate to one FTE. In addition, you provided work direction to other staff but you were not assigned supervisory responsibility for those positions. Your Position Description indicates that at the time of your position review, a vacant full-time position report to you. A reporting relationship for a vacant position does not equate to supervision of staff.

#### **5. Complexity of the Organizational Unit to which the Position Provides Administrative Support:**

At the AAA level, “[u]nit includes significant responsibility for at least two of the following functions: instruction, research, business services, administration (including student services), trades, patient care, community service and extended institution services.

At the AAB level, “[t]he organizational unit is complex and subdivided so that problems of coordination and control are of significant dimensions. Unit includes significant responsibility for at least three of the following functions: instruction, research, business services, administration (including student services), trades, patient care, community service and extended institution services.”

Within the Student Affairs and Enrollment Management organizational unit, your position provides administrative support for Registrar Services and the Office of Admissions. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management also includes Financial Aid, but you do not provide ongoing support in this area. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management does not include instruction, patient care, trades, research, community service or extended institution services. Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is not a complex and subdivided organization with significant responsibility for at least three functions as described at the AAB level. Therefore, the complexity of your organizational unit best fits the AAA level.

**6. Size of Organizational Unit to which AAB Positions Provides Administrative Support:**

In relevant part, at the AAB level, the organizational unit has “[s]ervice responsibility for more than 4,000 students or staff (full-time equivalent).”

Student Affairs and Enrollment Management has service responsibility for more than 4,000 students. Therefore, your organizational unit fits the AAB level.

In Boekhoff v. Bellevue Community College, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-002 (2007), the Personnel Resources Board addressed whether an AAA position should be reallocated to the AAB classification. The Board found that the position’s duties and responsibility did not rise to the level or scope of management authority intended by AAB classification. The Board determined that the appellant did not have the delegated budgetary authority envisioned at the AAB` level; did not monitor, control and develop budget estimates; did not establish short-term or long-term fiscal plans and performance goals; and did not develop, plan and coordinate special projects. The appellant was not a supervisor and the organizational unit did not encompass the breadth of complexity that requires coordination of efforts to the extent envisioned by the AAB classification. Therefore, the Board concluded that allocation to the AAB level was not appropriate.

Here, as in Boekhoff, your position does not have the delegated budgetary authority envisioned at the AAB level. You do not monitor, control and develop budget estimates; establish short-term or long-term fiscal plans and performance goals; or develop, plan and coordinate special projects. At the time of your position review, you were not a supervisor and the organizational unit did not encompass the breadth of complexity that requires coordination of efforts to the extent envisioned by the AAB.

While your position and organization unit meet some of the components of the AAB classification, the allocation of your position must be based on an assessment of the components of both the AAA and AAB classes in their entirety. The complexity of your organizational unit best fits the AAA level and overall, the majority of your duties, responsibilities and level of delegated decision-making authority best fit the AAA level. Your position is properly allocated.

**Appeal Rights**

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

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: Lorraine Chavez, CWU  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP