

September 4, 2008

TO: Cari Trussell
Employee Relations Specialist
Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA)

FROM: Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Cindy Boekhoff v. Bellevue Community College (BCC)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-07-085

On July 9, 2008, I conducted a Director's review conference at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of Ms. Boekhoff's position. Both you and Ms. Boekhoff were present at the Director's review conference. Lucy Macneil, Special Assistant to the Vice President of Human Resources, and Beatrice Hughes, Vice President of Human Resources for BCC participated by telephone conference call.

Background

On May 30, 2007, Ms. Boekhoff submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) to BCC's Human Resources (HR) Office, requesting that her Administrative Assistant A position be reallocated to the Administrative Assistant B classification (Exhibit D HR-1). On June 14, 2007, the HR Office received a copy of the PRR with the Supervisor Review section completed and signed by her supervisor, Laurel LaFever, Director of Campus Operations (Exhibit D HR-2). On August 29, 2007, the HR Office received an additional copy of the PRR with the signature of Laura Saunders, Vice President of Administrative Services (Exhibit D HR-3). On August 29, 2007, Ms. Macneil provided Ms. Boekhoff the results of her position review, determining Ms. Boekhoff's position should be reallocated to the Fiscal Specialist 1 classification. Specifically, Ms. Macneil determined the Fiscal Specialist 1 classification accurately described Ms. Boekhoff's responsibilities regarding budget tracking and reconciliation.

On September 26, 2007, the Department of Personnel received Ms. Boekhoff's request for a Director's review of BCC's allocation determination. In her request, Ms. Boekhoff asked that her position be reallocated to the Administrative Assistant 4 class.

Summary of Ms. Boekhoff's Perspective

Ms. Boekhoff asserts she is the sole administrative support to the head of a major sub-division of the largest community college in the state. As such, Ms. Boekhoff contends she provides direct support to the Director of Campus Operations in managing the departments under Campus Operations including budget development and management, expenditure control, general administrative and office management responsibilities, including records management and report preparation. Further, Ms. Boekhoff states she has institution-wide responsibilities for the following: management of traffic court; travel arrangements; training new managers and directors; attendance; minutes for weekly, confidential manager/director meetings; maintenance of personnel records; and building repairs and maintenance. In addition, Ms. Boekhoff contends reallocation to the Administrative Assistant B (Administrative Assistant 4) level is supported by her supervisor, as the Director of Campus Operations, and the Vice President of Administrative Services.

Summary of BCC's Reasoning

BCC recognizes Ms. Boekhoff's valuable contributions to the Campus Operations Program. However, BCC asserts the majority of Ms. Boekhoff's assigned responsibilities involve tracking and monitoring expenses as opposed to budget development. For example, BCC contends Ms. Boekhoff's duties include the following: sorting through invoices and contracts for proper budget charges; tracking expenditures on a complex spreadsheet; reconciling expenditures with monthly budget status reports; and handling purchase requisitions and reconciling procurement card bills. BCC contends Ms. Boekhoff's responsibilities for budget tracking and reconciliation and responses to inquiries do not rise to the level of a higher-level administrative position. BCC believes the Fiscal Specialist 1 classification appropriately describes the duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Boekhoff's position.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to May 30, 2007, the date Ms. Boekhoff submitted her request for a position review. In determining the effective date to consider the relevant classifications, I reviewed the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the State of Washington and the Washington Public Employees Association Higher Education for the period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2007. Provision 36.2 addresses position reviews and includes the following:

- E. The effective date of a reallocation resulting from an employee request for a position review is the date the request was filed with the Human Resources Office.

The HR Office first received Ms. Boekhoff's Position Review Request (PRR) on May 30, 2007, followed by a copy with her supervisor's signature on June 14, 2007. Although the copy containing the Vice President's signature was received on August 29, 2007, the effective date is May 30, 2007. Therefore, the relevant classifications in effect on May 30, 2007, include the following: Administrative Assistant A and B; Financial Specialist I.

As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review meeting, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Boekhoff's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position should be allocated to the Administrative Assistant A classification. Effective July 1, 2007, the Administrative Assistant 3 classification replaced the Administrative Assistant A.

Rationale for Determination

On the PRR, Ms. Boekhoff indicates she has sole responsibility for providing administrative support to the Director of Campus Operations. She emphasizes that Campus Operations has institution-wide responsibilities to approximately 35,000 students and 1282 staff (campus-wide). Subsequent to the Director's review, Ms. Boekhoff indicated there were more than 75 staff in Campus Operations (Exhibit J). In her administrative support role, Ms. Boekhoff indicates she has responsibility for "budget development and management, expenditure control, automated work order system management, general administration responsibilities, office management, records management, and report preparation" (Exhibit D HR-3). Ms. Boekhoff describes the majority of her duties (70%) as follows:

- Managing tracking, coordinating and reporting on all sub-department and division budgets, contracting, and allocation expenditures.
- The position requires minimal supervision and works independently.
- Representing the director when he and/or department managers are gone.
- Budget expenditures are entered on a multi-page complex Excel spreadsheet (over 40 pages/links) on the shared drive.

In the Supervisor Review Section, Ms. Boekhoff's supervisor, Laurel LaFever, describes examples of decisions Ms. Boekhoff is authorized to make without his approval as follows:

- Analysis of invoices and assignment of budget numbers as required.
- Obtaining outside services for repairs on campus for trades not employed by the college for safety or emergencies.

During the position review at BCC, Ms. Macneil indicated that she discussed Ms. Boekhoff's assignment of work with Mr. LaFever, asking whether there had been any changes since her last position review in 2005. In her allocation determination, Ms. Macneil wrote that Mr. LaFever indicated "there were no major changes" and the majority of Ms. Boekhoff's time was still spent performing the following duties:

- Sorting through invoices and contracts for proper budget charges;
- Tracking expenditures on a complex spreadsheet;
- Reconciling expenditures with monthly budget status reports;
- Handling purchase requisitions;
- Reconciling procurement card purchases.

In his discussion with Ms. Macneil, Mr. LaFever reiterated that Ms. Boekhoff provided sole administrative support to a large and complex department with institution-wide responsibilities. During the Director's review conference, Ms. Boekhoff gave examples of other administrative duties, including increasing responsibilities related to traffic court on campus, travel arrangements for Mr. LaFever and his staff, and training new managers and directors. Ms. Boekhoff also described administrative functions such as processing new employee paperwork, tracking attendance and leave records, and taking minutes for weekly director's meetings (staff meetings Mr. LaFever has for his direct reports). Ms. Boekhoff also contacts vendors and makes arrangements for maintenance and repairs on campus. These duties, however, do not comprise the majority of Ms. Boekhoff's assigned duties and responsibilities. For example, the duties relating to traffic court and her responsibility for taking minutes at the weekly director's confidential staff meetings make up 10% of her overall work. Duties relating to attendance and leave comprise 5% of her overall work, and Ms. Boekhoff indicated she does not have responsibility for approving leave.

In addition, the examples of work provided are consistent with Administrative Assistant A level work. For example, the email correspondence shows Ms. Boekhoff relays information or instructions from Mr. LaFever when she reminds staff not to block fire extinguishers with recycle bins (Exhibit E-5, page 6) or relays that Mr. LaFever wants an elevator phone repaired (Exhibit E-5, page 8). The email examples also indicate specific instructions from Mr. LaFever to Ms. Boekhoff for duties such as transcribing a voice mail or converting email text into a Word document (Exhibit E-5, pages 5 and 32). With regard to training new managers, Ms. Boekhoff gave examples that included explaining the proper procedures for submitting invoices and using the purchase card and other processes like setting up and accessing email.

Although Ms. Boekhoff attends Mr. LaFever's staff meetings for directors/managers in the sub-departments of Campus Operations, Ms. Boekhoff's role is to take meeting minutes for her supervisor (Exhibit E-7, page 39). Ms. Boekhoff does not attend meetings on behalf of her supervisor that involve senior administrative staff at her supervisor's level. While Ms. Boekhoff serves as the primary contact in her supervisor's absence (Exhibit E-5, pages 1 & 2), she does not have the authority to regularly make commitments on his behalf, though she may contact outside services in emergency situations. When considering the overall assignment of work to Ms. Boekhoff's position, the bulk of her work relates to tracking and monitoring budget-related activities for Campus Operations, including the various sub-departments.

When considering the level of budget-related responsibilities, I reviewed the examples of work Ms. Boekhoff provided in the exhibit notebook (Exhibit E). Some examples include the following:

- Ms. Boekhoff tracks budget amounts charged to various account codes in Campus Operations (Exhibit E-4, pages 3-5).
- Ms. Boekhoff has the authority to use a Purchasing Card within a specified amount (Exhibit E-4, page 6).

- At the direction of her supervisor, Ms. Boekhoff can modify an existing open purchase order but does so within the limits of the allocated budget (Exhibit E-4, page 7).
- Ms. Boekhoff tracks expenditures for open purchase order vendors in an Excel spreadsheet (Exhibit E-7, page 43 – also referred to as Exhibit I, item 16).
- Ms. Boekhoff creates complex Excel spreadsheets for tracking a variety of expenditures. For example, she breaks out the supplies and materials for the Maintenance Budget (Exhibit E-4, pages 19-35 – also referred to as Exhibit I, beginning with item 26).

Ms. Boekhoff reviews and audits invoices to ensure the dollar amount billed is correct. Because she tracks, monitors, and audits the expenditures, she has been able to find discrepancies where the college has been overcharged or billed for services no longer needed (Exhibit E-4, pages 13 & 14 - also referred to as Exhibit I, items 20 & 21). The budget information she tracks also provides useful information to her supervisor to assist him in making budget decisions. Ms. Boekhoff, however, does not make budget decisions on behalf of Mr. LaFever. The examples of work Ms. Boekhoff provided are consistent with Mr. LaFever's characterization of budget responsibilities, which include tracking and reconciling expenditures (Exhibit D HR-4, page 2).

The class series concept for the Fiscal Specialist I (Class Code 2036) states:

Provide administrative support to administrator or manager in the area of fiscal and/or business management. Apply principles of financial management to perform such functions as record keeping, auditing, analysis, budgeting, payroll, travel, purchasing and other types of fiscal operations.

The basic function is to “[p]rovide fiscal support in areas such as budget maintenance, payroll, purchasing, travel, expenditure control and/or fiscal analysis.”

Distinguishing characteristics for the Fiscal Specialist I include performing one or more fiscal administrative support functions for an organizational unit, such as establishing and maintaining a comprehensive system for recording fiscal activity and coordinating purchasing functions and expenditure control. Positions at this level exercise independent judgment in interpreting and applying rules and regulations to resolve problems. Positions also independently advise staff and administrators regarding applicable policy and procedures and select/recommend alternative courses of action. Incumbents use established procedures in recording, summarizing and reporting fiscal activity.

Although the level of fiscal responsibility assigned to Ms. Boekhoff's position is consistent with the Fiscal Specialist I, and she performs some duties that fit within this classification, the overall scope of her position better aligns with the Administrative Assistant class series.

The Administrative Assistant 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.

The Basic Function for both the Administrative Assistant A and B classes essentially state the same function, which includes providing support to “the chief administrator or head of a major organization unit such as [an] . . . administrative department . . .” Positions also represent the administrator and/or unit's goals and interests and provide and/or coordinate functions that include budget, contract proposal preparation, records management, and/or personnel administration. The overall scope of Ms. Boekhoff's position is to provide administrative support to the Director of Campus Operations. In performing her duties, the majority of her work involves budget responsibilities that include sorting, reviewing, tracking, monitoring, and reporting expenditures. These duties fit within the Administrative Assistant class series concept.

Allocations to the Administrative Assistant A and B 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 require 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; 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 Administrative Assistant A 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 Administrative Assistant B level, “[d]elegated decision making authority is exercised in areas such as approval of expenditures which require changes in budgetary plans . . . and development of procedures to facilitate adherence to institution or funding agency policies.” Further, positions exercise judgment to solve unusual administrative problems consistent with the objectives and policies of the unit and university or college.

Ms. Boekhoff’s level of decision making authority meets the Administrative Assistant A level. She makes decisions within limited authority, such as modifying an open purchase order within an allotted budget or making purchases with the Purchase Card, but she has not been assigned the responsibility of approving expenditures that require a change in budgetary plans.

2. Scope of the Position's Operational Responsibility:

At the Administrative Assistant A level, positions “[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 Administrative Assistant B level:

Monitor, 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 Ms. Boekhoff tracks and monitors expenditures, points out discrepancies, and may make recommendations, she has not been assigned the responsibility for developing budget estimates at the level envisioned by the Administrative Assistant B class. Rather, she presents budget information in detailed spreadsheets. The spreadsheets provide her supervisor with the information necessary to make budget decisions.

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

At the Administrative Assistant A level, positions “[r]epresent the administrator/head within the campus community and provide interpretation or explanation of supervisor's policies or viewpoints.” Positions also have frequent contacts with management representatives, both on and off campus, “through which incumbents coordinate activities and functions of the unit.”

At the Administrative Assistant B level:

Have 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 judgment may have significant impact.

The scope and impact of Ms. Boekhoff's organizational contact are consistent with the Administrative Assistant A. She represents Mr. LaFever in his absence by serving as the primary contact when situations arise or an immediate response is needed. She also coordinates activities and functions with the directors and managers reporting to Mr. LaFever and coordinates special events for Campus Operations. While she participates in her supervisor's regular staff meetings, her position has been tasked with actively listening and interpreting the information discussed at the meetings to create meeting minutes. Ms. Boekhoff's position has not been delegated the authority to commit to courses of action without supervisory approval.

4. Scope of Position's Supervisory Responsibility:

Both the Administrative Assistant A and B classes indicate that “[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 Administrative Assistant B level, positions will typically supervise support staff performing a variety of functions or services.

Ms. Boekhoff's position has not been assigned supervisory responsibility.

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

At the Administrative Assistant A 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 Administrative Assistant B 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.”

Ms. Boekhoff provides administrative support to the Director of Campus Operations. Within Campus Operations, the following sub-departments report to her supervisor: Custodial Services; Grounds; Material Resources (Warehouse); Public Safety; Maintenance; and Facilities Planning & Construction (Exhibit E-3, page 1). While six sub-departments report to Mr. LaFever, the functions all tie to campus operations. The Campus Operations Department is part of Administrative Services (Exhibit E-3, page 2), which has a broader range of services. The administrative support Ms. Boekhoff provides to Campus Operations is consistent with the Administrative Assistant A level.

6. Size of Organizational Unit to which Administrative Assistant B Positions Provide Administrative Support:

In part, at the Administrative Assistant B level, the organizational unit "has more than 75 full-time equivalent professional and/or classified staff."

Ms. Boekhoff indicated that Campus Operations has more than 75 staff members (Exhibit J). Therefore, her position meets this characteristic.

Further, Administrative Assistant B positions "serve as both sole administrative support AND the executive secretary reporting to the organization head." These positions are assigned to major units with institution-wide responsibility that have no assistant directors, deans or managers who would share the administrative duties of the position.

While Ms. Boekhoff provides sole administrative support to Campus Operations, the level of assigned responsibilities is not consistent with the level envisioned by the Administrative Assistant B class. In reaching this conclusion, I considered the totality of her duties, as well as her level of budget responsibility, which comprises the majority of her work. At the Administrative Assistant B level, positions will typically be more involved in budget development, monitoring and controlling budgets from a variety of sources. While Ms. Boekhoff tracks expenditures and monitors budget status, her position has not been tasked with the responsibility of developing or controlling a budget, and she does not have the authority to make changes to the budget. In reviewing the documents and exhibits, I concluded that no major changes had occurred with respect to budget related duties since Ms. Boekhoff's previous position review. Therefore, I reviewed the Personnel Resources Board decision regarding the allocation of Ms. Boekhoff's position in 2005 (Exhibit K).

In Boekhoff v. Bellevue Community College, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-002 (2007), the Personnel Resources Board addressed whether her Administrative Assistant A position should be reallocated to the Administrative Assistant B classification. The Board found that her position's duties and responsibility did not rise to the level or scope of management authority intended by the Administrative Assistant B classification. The Board determined her position did not have the delegated budgetary authority envisioned at the Administrative Assistant B 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. Further, she 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 Administrative Assistant B classification. Therefore, the Board concluded that allocation to the Administrative Assistant B level was not appropriate.

Consistent with the Board's decision, I conclude the scope of assigned duties and level of administrative responsibility assigned to Ms. Boekhoff's position fit the Administrative Assistant A classification.

It is clear Ms. Boekhoff performs her job well, and the college benefits from her knowledge, skills, and abilities. However, a position's allocation is not based on an evaluation of

performance or an individual's ability to perform higher-level work. Rather, it is based on the majority of work assigned to a position. Therefore, the Administrative Assistant A classification best describes Ms. Boekhoff's position. Effective July 1, 2007, the Administrative Assistant 3 classification replaced the Administrative Assistant A.

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.

Enclosure: List of Exhibits