



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

STATE HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION | DIRECTOR'S REVIEW PROGRAM

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May 26, 2016

TO: Kristie Wilson  
Rules and Appeals Program Manager

FROM: Nancy Jacobski  
Director's Review Specialist

SUBJECT: Deborah Strand  
Allocation Review Request ALLO-16-002

**Director's Determination**

As the Director's Review Specialist, I carefully considered the documentation in the file and the exhibits provided by both Parties. Based on my review and analysis of Deborah Strand's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position should be reallocated from Secretary Senior to Administrative Assistant 2.

**Background**

On October 15, 2015, Ms. Strand submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) to the Human Resource (HR) Office at Central Washington University (CWU) requesting reallocation from Secretary Senior to Program Coordinator or Administrative Assistant 3 (AA 3).

By letter dated December 11, 2015, Katelyn Jones, Human Resource Representative, CWU, notified Ms. Strand that her position remained allocated to Secretary Senior (Exhibit B-1).

On January 7, 2016, Office of Financial Management (OFM) State HR received Ms. Strand's request for a Director's review of CWU's allocation determination (Exhibit A-1). In her request, Ms. Strand stated she believes the duties of her position best fit the Program Coordinator job class.

On April 21, 2016, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference. Present for the conference were Ms. Strand, Appellant; Jason Mackay, General Council, PSE; Dr. Ian Loverro, Chair, Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum; Katelyn Jones, HR/CWU; and Lorraine Chavez, HR/CWU.

### **Rationale for Director's 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. *Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University*, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

### **Organizational Structure**

As illustrated in the organizational chart (Exhibits B-3 and B-4), Academics at CWU includes numerous colleges and departments, one of which is the College of Education and Professional Studies. The professors, assistant professors, adjunct faculty and lecturers in this department report to the Dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies.

Under College of Education and Professional Studies is the Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum (EFC), chaired by Dr. Loverro. Dr. Loverro supervises Ms. Strand. Ms. Strand directs the work of a Graduate Assistant.

### **Position Purpose**

In support of Dr. Loverro, Ms. Strand provides a variety of services and information to students, the public and faculty, much of which includes information on how to become a certified teacher. Classes offered by the department include the Professional Education Program (PEP), Field Experiences, Instructional Foundations and the Master Teacher Program. Ms. Strand assists faculty with various logistical tasks and questions and under the direction of Dr. Loverro, administers the department budget.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

According to the PRR, Ms. Strand's duties and responsibilities are divided by the following percentages:

40%

- Extensive involvement with students.
- Advise prospective students about the EFC Professional Education Program and the 40 hours of pre-observation required for entry into the class.
- Determine reason current students are not able to enroll in an EFC class and either rectify situation or refer them to the EFC Chair.
- Find substitutions for the Field Experience class when students have completed the requirements for a waiver and obtain EFC Chair's signature.
- Monitor enrollment in courses and report results to Chair.
- Supervise, direct, assist and evaluate graduate assistant.

25%

- Reconcile and monitor five EFC budgets.
- Prepare fiscal reports such as budget estimates as directed by Chair.
- Prepare non-tenure track contract spreadsheets for Chair approval.
- Evaluate costs and purchase equipment including computers and supplies.
- Monitor and reconcile department credit card.

25%

- Provide administrative support to supervisor and coordinate office operations.
- Serve as liaison between supervisor and faculty members.
- Transcribe minutes.
- Screen calls and visitors.
- Provide administrative support for the EFC Master Teacher Graduate program by answering questions, responding to inquiries, creating marketing materials such as brochures and flyers, and maintain files.

5%

- Monitor and reconcile faculty professional development funds.
- Prepare all travel expenditures for faculty reimbursement and submit to travel office.

5%

- Maintain, revise, and create new content for the EFC website.

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

Ms. Strand states she spends the vast majority of her time performing specialized duties in support of the EFC, particularly with teacher certifications in the PEP. Ms. Strand points out that her duties changed since the original PD in 2013. She asserts her duties and responsibilities moved away from the duties of the Secretary Senior job class. Ms. Strand contends her duties align with the Program Coordinator class specification. Some of these duties include advising; budget preparation and forecasting; monitoring enrollment; controlling expenditures and a variety of other specialized work. Ms. Strand further contends the EFC has its own mission, goals and objectives and, if the department ceased to exist, the college would continue to function normally. Ms. Strand states the EFC's autonomy is consistent with the definition of a program, which states in the Glossary of Classification Terms:

"A specialized area with specific complex components and tasks that distinguish it from other programs (or the main body of an organization)."

Ms. Strand asserts she provides very little secretarial support to Dr. Loverro. She takes minutes for staff meetings only; does not handle Dr. Loverro's or any other professional's correspondence; and does not manage calendars.

### **Summary of CWU's Perspective**

CWU asserts that EFC has been identified as a department with its own unique department number, as other departments, and therefore, does not fit the definition of program. CWU maintains that 60% of Ms. Strand's duties in her PRR fit the definition of Secretary Senior, which includes 25% of the duties specifying budget work; 25% of the duties specifying administrative support; 5% regarding monitoring and reconciling faculty Professional Development Funds; and 5% around maintaining the website.

CWU contends that handling budgets and being the primary contact in the unit is typical for the Secretary Senior job class. While CWU realizes there are duties unique to the department, consistent with the definition of a program, Ms. Strand's functions within an academic department, not a program; and the preponderance of her tasks fit the definition of Secretary Senior.

### **Comparison of Duties to Class Specifications**

I carefully reviewed the exhibits submitted by the Parties. In *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the Personnel Resources Board stated the following standards are the hierarchy of primary considerations when allocating positions:

- Class series concept (if one exists).
- Definition or basic function of the class.
- Distinguishing characteristics of a class.

Typical work is not an allocating criterion, but may be used to better understand the definition or distinguishing characteristics. (See *Kristen Mansfield v. Department of Fish and Wildlife*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-11-014, 2014).

### **Program Series Class Series Concept**

The class series concept for the program series is found in the Program Assistant class specification:

Perform work requiring knowledge and experience that is *specific to a program*. Organize and perform work related to program operations independent of the daily administrative office needs of the supervisor. Represent the program to clients, participants and/or members of the public.

**A program is a specialized area with specific complex components and discrete tasks which distinguish it from the main body of an organization.** A program is specific to a particular subject. The specialized tasks involve interpretation of policies, procedures and regulations, budget coordination/administration, **independent functioning** and typically, public contact. Duties are not of a general support nature transferable from one program to another. Performance of clerical duties is in support of incumbent's performance of specialized tasks.

**Per the Glossary of Classification Terms, a program is defined in relevant part as:**

A specialized area with specific complex components and tasks **that distinguish it from other programs (or the main body of an organization)**. A program is specific to a particular subject and has a specific mission, goals, and objectives. **A program typically has an identifiable funding source and separate budget code.**

### **Program Coordinator Definition**

Coordinate the operation of a specialized or technical program.

### **Program Coordinator Distinguishing Characteristics**

Under general direction, perform work **using knowledge and experience specific to the program**. Exercise independent judgment in interpreting and applying rules and regulations. Independently advise students, staff, program participants and/or the public regarding program content, policies, procedures and activities; select/recommend alternative courses of action and either: Project, monitor, maintain, initiate and/or approve expenditures on program budgets

OR

Have extensive involvement with students, staff, the public and/or agencies **in carrying out program activities, and coordinate, schedule and monitor program activities to determine consistency with program goals.**

The department for which Ms. Strand supports is not detached from normal college operations. Rather, just like other academic departments, the EFC is an integral part of standard college operations. Without academics, which includes professional teacher coursework, the college would not exist. The mission of CWU states, in relevant part:

“... The faculty develop and strengthen bachelor's and master's degree programs in the arts, sciences, and humanities; **in teacher education**; in business; in the social services; and in technological specializations...”

In many state agencies and higher education institutions the term “program” is frequently used interchangeably with “division,” “department,” “section” and “unit.” However, when allocating a position, a true program must be separate and distinct from the main body of the organization. College programs include such missions as outreach to communities and typically have their own source of grant funding. For example, outreach plans to middle schools or prison education efforts are valid programs for allocation purposes and require staff to manage funding and organize activities and operations based on allotted funds. If outreach efforts to middle schools ended, regular college operations would continue and the college's mission would not be affected. If EFC and other academic departments were removed from CWU, the college would cease to exist. In essence, academic departments do not function independently from the college, rather they are the essential purpose of the college.

Another function of a Program Coordinator is the organization of activities and operations. Aside from the EFC not meeting the definition of “program,” Ms. Strand does not coordinate activities and the operation of the EFC, nor does she coordinate, schedule, and monitor program activities to determine consistency with program goals.

Given Ms. Strand is a staff member within an academic department she is not a part of a true “program” and does not coordinate activities of a program. Therefore, Program Coordinator is not an appropriate fit for her position.

### Secretary Class Series Concept

In support of a supervisor and/or staff members, provides secretarial services and assistance for the purpose of **facilitating the supervisor's and/or staff members' own work and relieving the supervisor and/or staff members of day-to-day clerical detail. Applies knowledge of supervisor's and/or staff members' work commitments including status of projects and nature of contacts.** Secretarial duties include making travel arrangements, scheduling meetings, taking notes and transcribing minutes, screening calls and visitors, keeping supervisor's and/or staff members calendar(s) and committing supervisor's and/or staff members' time.

According to her PRR, the majority of Ms. Strand's duties entail advising, troubleshooting, tracking and recommending solutions related to the EFC. Contrary to the class series concept of Secretary, Ms. Strand does not facilitate Dr. Loverro's work and relieve him of day-to-day clerical detail. While she does make travel arrangements for faculty and transcribes minutes for staff meetings, this is a small portion of her job. The majority of Ms. Strand's duties and responsibilities entail applying EFC knowledge to carry out such functions as:

- Advising students on PEP requirements;
- Advising students on transfer requirements;
- Troubleshooting student enrollment issues;
- Forecasting enrollment based on historical data;
- Tracking and rectifying enrollment and registrations and discussing with Dr. Loverro the options of creating more classes or expanding class sizes;
- Providing faculty pertinent information about students;
- Tracking non-tenured faculty contracts to ensure they do not exceed their limitations and, if needed, facilitates a new contract;
- Reconciling and monitoring EFC budgets;
- Preparing budget estimates;
- Monitoring and reconciling EFC credit card;
- Monitoring and controlling expenditures to inform Mr. Laverro of the status;
- Coordinating the purchase of major equipment;
- Transferring funds between budgets with Mr. Laverro's approval.
- Performing budget forecasting;
- Strategizing with Mr. Laverro on the interpretation of policies.

Ms. Strand does not apply knowledge of Mr. Laverro's work commitments including status of projects and nature of contacts, emphasized in the class series concept for Secretary. She does not spend the majority of her time performing routine secretarial duties such as making travel arrangements, scheduling meetings and/or classes, taking notes and transcribing minutes, keeping supervisors and/or staff member's calendar(s), producing final copy documents from drafts, and composing forms and letters. Rather, Ms. Strand has been designated a portion of the EFC's work. She functions independently on her portion of departmental responsibilities and refers to Dr. Loverro on an as-needed basis or for authorization on questionable or unusual issues. Similarly, Dr. Loverro refers to Ms. Strand for information and advice to help him make decisions.

### **Secretary Senior Definition**

**Perform complex secretarial duties** such as independently planning, organizing and prioritizing work, monitoring and evaluating budget(s) status and initiating corrections, developing travel itineraries, compiling reports, studies, and/or applications, developing, modifying, and/or maintaining data base management, office record keeping, or filing system(s), establishing office procedures, standards, priorities, and deadlines, and coordinating office operations. Positions initiate action to ensure work unit and/or office goals are met and have frequent contacts with clients, the public, staff members from other departments, students, and faculty.

Assignments and projects are of a complex nature. Independent performance of complex secretarial assignments requires substantive knowledge of a variety of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, processes, materials, or equipment. Problems are resolved by choosing from established procedures and/or devising work methods. Guidance is available for new or unusual situations. Deviation from established parameters requires approval. Work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with established policies and procedures.

As stated earlier, the first consideration in a position allocation is the class specification's class series concept, followed by the definition and distinguishing characteristics. Ms. Strand's duties do not fit the class series concept for the Secretary, hindering allocation to Secretary Senior.

### **Administrative Assistant 1 Distinguishing Characteristics**

While there is no class series concept for the Administrative Assistant series, the distinguishing characteristics within the AA 1 class specification speak to the differences between clerical positions and Administrative Assistants:

**Administrative Assistants can be distinguished from clerical positions by the formal delegation and regular exercise of the following responsibilities:**

- Reviewing the work of professional staff for completeness, to assure that input-output is in compliance with laws, rules, policies, procedures and standards;
- Controlling the professional staff's work by directing changes, corrections and authorizing exceptions to ensure compliance with the supervisor's schedules and priorities;
- Prioritizing the professional staff's workload within established guidelines; and
- Coordinating the professional staff's work within an agency, between agencies, with the public and/or other governmental entities.

**OR**

**The technical work addressed in the definition is distinguished by a professional position fully delegating a technical portion of the position's duties which in turn encompasses the majority of the Administrative Assistant's work and can be traced to originate directly from a professional position's duties and responsibilities.**

**Administrative Assistant positions do not report to a clerical supervisor. Their work is not clerical or secretarial as stated in those class specifications. However, only positions at this level in the class series may be assigned some clerical and/or secretarial duties not to exceed 25% of the total work.**

Ms. Strand reports to the Chair of the EFC, who in turn manages the operations of the department. Ms. Strand is responsible for technical portions of the EFC delegated by and originating from Dr. Loverro. Part of the operations and the majority of Ms. Strand's work includes advising students, monitoring and rectifying enrollment in the department's classes, troubleshooting registration issues, managing the flow of the faculty recruitment process for the department and monitoring and projecting budgets. The majority of Ms. Strand's duties and responsibilities are administrative, not clerical.

### **Administrative Assistant 3 Definition**

Positions perform varied administrative and secretarial support duties **or positions are responsible for one or more major program activities under a second line supervisor.**

### **Administrative Assistant 3 Distinguishing Characteristics**

**Positions are delegated higher-level administrative support duties or positions are delegated one or more major program activities that would be performed under a second-level professional supervisor, manager or administrator in WMS Band II or above or in exempt service, chief administrator, or head of a major organizational unit such as a school, college, or major academic or administrative department.** Only one position will be allocated to an individual second-line supervisor for those positions performing one or more major program activities.

A major program activity is defined as a function that is a major element of the supervisor's job. The duty must stand alone and would create significant adverse consequences if poorly performed. However, full delegation can't occur if the supervisor's position requires specialized licensure such as attorneys, medical doctors, and engineers.

Higher-level administrative duties are duties of a substantive nature that are appropriate to be performed by the supervisor, manager, administrator, or professional level employee but have been delegated to the administrative assistant to perform. Areas may include but are not limited to, the following: budget development and/or management, expenditure control, office space management, equipment purchases, budget development and/or management, public relations, personnel administration, records management, and report preparation.

Incumbents in these positions represent the supervisors and/or unit's goals and interests and provide interpretation or explanation of the supervisor's policies or viewpoints.



The level of Administrative Assistant is determined in part by the organizational structure and reporting line. The complexity of work for an AA 3 is in some measure demonstrated by the AA 3's supervisor serving as a second-level supervisor, meaning the supervisor manages other supervisors.

Ms. Strand directs the work of intermittent, rotating, part time Graduate Assistants, but neither Dr. Loverro nor Ms. Strand supervise him or her. Both the definition and distinguishing characteristics specify definitively that the duties must include major program activities under a second line supervisor. Dr. Loverro is not a second line supervisor, precluding allocation of Ms. Strand's position to AA 3.

### **Administrative Assistant 2 Definition**

Provide administrative and staff support services for a section or unit with delegated authority to act in supervisor's absence in **areas of substance**.

### **Administrative Assistant 2 Distinguishing Characteristics**

These positions may be distinguished from lower level classes by addition of the delegation of authority to **act for or in the regular place of the superior in substantive areas, and/or supervision of some professional or several clerical subordinates and a formal reporting alignment identifying the position as the principal administrative assistant to the superior who is at the first professional supervisory level or above.**

Ms. Strand independently handles and/or confers with Dr. Loverro regarding a variety of budgetary matters and Dr. Loverro relies on Ms. Strand to manage budget projections based on past data. Not only does Ms. Strand meet the distinguishing characteristics for the AA series (stated above in the AA 1 class specification), but her duties and responsibilities are distinguished from the AA 1 by her handling some substantive areas for the supervisor. Because Dr. Loverro is typically in meetings or serving in his primary role as professor, Ms. Strand serves as his liaison. She is the face of the EFC and often expected to troubleshoot and solve routine problems and advise students, faculty and the public. Dr. Loverro relies upon her to field questions and resolve problems concerning enrollment, scheduling, adding and dropping classes, and a variety of other issues. While Dr. Loverro approves the budget, Ms. Strand prepares the budget, runs reports and rectifies budget anomalies and issues by correlating with appropriate staff. She independently prepares course substitutions for Dr. Loverro's signature; determines whether student's accumulated hours for the pre-observation requirement are appropriate; coordinates the purchase of major equipment maintenance work; screens calls and visitors; and tentatively commits Mr. Loverro to action and meetings.

The technical work addressed in the distinguishing characteristics for AA 1 involves a professional position fully delegating a technical portion of the position's duties. This delegated portion encompasses the majority of the Administrative Assistant's work and can be traced to originate directly from a professional position's duties and responsibilities. Ms. Strand meets the definition of an AA 1. In addition, Ms. Strand is required to field questions and problem-solve routine problems with faculty, staff, the public and students on essential and significant EFC issues. This added responsibility raises the duties and responsibilities of Ms. Strand's position to Administrative Assistant 2. Therefore, Ms. Strand's position best fits the class specification for Administrative Assistant 2.

### **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 mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is PO Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located on the 3rd floor of the Raad Building, 128 10th Avenue SW, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 407-4101 and the fax number is (360) 586-4694.

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

c: Deborah Strand, Appellant  
Jason Mackay, General Counsel, PSE  
Katelyn Jones, Human Resource Consultant, CWU

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

**Deborah Strand vs. Central Washington University**

**ALLO-15-094**

List of Exhibits

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