



STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

STATE HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION | DIRECTOR'S REVIEW PROGRAM
P.O. Box 40911 · Olympia, WA 98504-0911 · (360) 407-4101 · FAX (360) 586-4694

January 10, 2018

TO: Connie Goff
Rules and Appeals Program Section Chief

FROM: Christa Biasi
Director's Review Specialist

SUBJECT: Mohammad "Mike" Sadeghian v. Bellevue College (BC)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-17-063

DIRECTOR'S DETERMINATION

This position review is based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to May 17, 2017, the date that BC Human Resources (BC HR) received Mike Sadeghian's Position Review Request (PRR, Exhibit B-3) requesting his position be allocated to Fiscal Analyst (FA) 2. As the Director's Review Specialist, I carefully considered all the exhibits. Based on my review and analysis of Mr. Sadeghian's assigned job duties; I conclude his position is properly allocated to a Fiscal Analyst 1.

BACKGROUND

On May 17, 2017, Mr. Sadeghian's PRR was received by BC HR requesting his position be reallocated from FA 1 to FA 2. (Exhibit B-3)

By letter dated July 7, 2017, Aaron Hilliard, Vice President of Human Resources, notified Mr. Sadeghian that his request to be allocated from FA 1 to FA 2 had been denied. (Exhibit B-1)

On August 7, 2017, Office of Financial Management State Human Resources (OFM SHR) received Ms. Sadeghian's request for a Director Review of BC HR's allocation determination whereby he requested to be allocated to FA 2. (Exhibit A-1)

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

Mr. Sadeghian's position is located in the North Campus within the Finance and Services Department of Bellevue College. He reports to a FA 5.

POSITION OBJECTIVE

According to the PRR (Exhibit B-3) the position purpose is as follows:

As a team member of Finance Department, I am entrusted with trustworthy accountability working at two Campuses - Main Campus and North Campus (Continuing Education) with transactions process pertaining to student accounts, sponsor accounts, Nelnet online payment system and Cybersource web based system.

Provide excellent customer service to students, staff and community by processing payments, refunds and adjustments as required. Supporting students by providing registration and financial information within the objective of meeting the requirement of Fiscal Ethics.

Interact and assist other department staff (Financial Aid, OIE, Enrollment, Occupational Life Skills program and other) in accomplishing any required task and work as a cross functional team for optimum working environment and for success of our students and college.

Duties and Responsibilities Position Review Request (PRR, Exhibit B-2)

Mr. Sadeghian outlines in his PRR that he spends 40% of his time providing customer service to students and college departments with accurate and timely process of transactions. He lists these duties in part as:

- Review, analyze, verify, interpret and process students'/sponsor tuition payment transaction in person/phone/web on daily basis. Process in timely manner bus passes
- Assessment test fees and scholarship. Process deposit from Early Learning Center, Gym, Student Program and various club, Computer Lab, Science and Events program.
- Clarify any question pertaining to students account with students/staff and resolving the issue on priority basis using independent judgement keeping the priority of good customer service along with FERPA guidelines.
- Advise students for STEPP/NELNET payment program enrollment based on ethical judgment and setting up the STEPP payment plan which assists student's educational goal achievements. Adjust STEPP payment program as and when payment is processed.
- Process card, check and web based refund.
- Independently research and analysis Bank Chargeback pertaining to students'/sponsor card transaction disputes and to communicate with Bank Services acceptance/disagreement of any disputes and communicate the decision along with a report to Finance Department.

- Process Books voucher award as communicated by email or corporate account report accurately in student account and in case of discrepancies notify supervisor/finance staff for updating the information.
- Process Books refund as per authorization voucher in timely and accurate manner and send back up to finance department.

Furthermore, he states he spends 25% researching, analyzing, adjusting financial aid award and student accounts to portray accurate student financial statements. The remainder of his duties are processing sponsor payments and reconciling Nelnet and Cyber source web payment and filing daily and weekly reports.

SUMMARY OF MR. SADEGHIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Request for a Director's Review (Exhibit A-1)

In his Request for Director's Review, Mr. Sadeghian emphasizes his duties are performed at two separate campuses as a student financial services specialist (not as a cashier). He continues by outlining he performs his duties independently three days a week with no direct supervision and the other days his duties are performed at Bellevue College, one of which under the general supervision of his supervisor.

Mr. Sadeghian requests the Director Review Specialist take into considering his submitted PRR, and that "a good portion" of BC HRs Classification Analysis Report is cut and pasted from a previously submitted reallocation request.

SUMMARY OF BC HR'S PERSPECTIVE

Classification Analysis Report (Exhibit B-2)

David Hall, Human Resource Generalist prepared a memorandum to Aaron Hilliard, Vice President of Human Resources. Mr. Hall's analysis states:

Mike works independently, and with supervision that primarily occurs through email or phone communication. He works at the North Campus as the only cashier three days a week, and at main campus in Student Financial Services the remaining two days while his supervisor Jennifer works the remaining two days. His daily tasks are completed without prompting, and include generating reports through DATAX in HP, pulling auto-generated reports, analyzing and compiling data, processing/posting payments or updating records using the data, finding discrepancies and recommending solutions.

Mr. Hall further states Mr. Sadeghian reconciles a variety of accounts, reports, processes, awards, etc. He identifies issues by seeking answers and recommending procedural changes to better assist student, streamline work and/or reduce future errors. He researches and analyzes Bank Chargeback related to students'/sponsor card transaction disputes and communicates with Bank Services acceptance/disagreement of disputes and communicates the decision to the Finance Department. According to Mr. Hall, Mr. Sadeghian processes and adjusts student financial aid award by direction from the Financial Aid staff or available report to accurately reflect the actual award applied for students. Although these are not all of the duties outlined by Mr. Hall in his analysis, all duties have been taken into consideration during this review.

Mr. Hall states that Mr. Sadeghian does not conduct institution-wide fiscal administration evaluation and reviews or grant and contract proposals and negotiate resulting awards. Ms. Hall continued by outlining the following:

Mike does not look at revenues received or bank statements in general. Mike does review bank charge backs by reviewing the student accounts. Mike in his current position does not project incoming and outgoing cash requirements to determine effects on investments; he also does not analyzes [sic], review and or make recommendations for the acceleration of revenue transfers. Authorizing and adjusting entries between banks or agencies to maintain effective accounting controls is not within his scope.

Mr. Hall continued his analysis by also stating Mr. Sadeghian does not reconcile with reserves to agency subsidiary, he does not review and approve payroll documents and deduction forms and consulting on payroll problems, federal taxes, electronic fund transfers, insurance, nor does he supervise or lead. He is however, considered the senior experienced staff member and does advise newly hired staff on procedures. It is based on the foregoing; BC HR does not believe the FA 2 is the appropriate class for Mr. Sadeghian.

COMPARISON OF DUTIES TO CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

I carefully reviewed the exhibits submitted by the Parties. Allocating criteria consists of the class specification's class series concept (if one exists), the definition and the distinguishing characteristics.¹ Typical work is not an allocating criterion, but may be used to better understand the definition or distinguishing characteristics. Furthermore, it is important to note that Mr. Sadeghian provided a job announcement for a similar position within BC, however, the allocation or misallocation of another position is not within the scope of this review and therefore cannot be taken under consideration.

Fiscal Analyst

Class Series Concept

Positions in this occupational group conduct a variety of financial reviews and analysis of fiscal, grants, contracts or other financial data in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

These are professional positions which analyze and interpret what the fiscal information means to draw conclusions and trends based upon that data.

Positions determine what is the relationship between fiscal variables by generating items, choosing analysis, translating, or explaining their results and taking appropriate action based upon the analysis and interpretation of the financial data.

¹ In *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the Personnel Resources Board (Board) stated that the following standards are the hierarchy of primary considerations in allocating positions: a) Category concept (if one exists); b) Definition or basic function of the class; c) Distinguishing characteristics of a class; and d) Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other classes in the series in question.

The majority of work assigned to professional positions does not involve verifying the accuracy of the fiscal data or the routine collection, reviewing and posting of fiscal record keeping tasks according to established procedures as contained in the office, fiscal or budget support group.

Positions throughout this occupational group often lead or supervise office, fiscal or budget support staff. However, leadworker or supervisory positions at the 3, 4 or 5 levels must perform these functions over fiscal related professional staff.

Fiscal Analyst 1 Definition

This is the entry level of the series. Positions work under close to general supervision and are required to analyze and interpret reoccurring reports produced by an automated or manual financial system. Positions often assist higher level professional staff in the design and implementation of financial systems grants or contracts. Recommends the establishment of fiscal controls and financial review to improve agency business practices.

Fiscal Analyst 2 Definition

This is the journey, occupational or working level of the series. Positions work independently under general supervision within their area of responsibility. Positions can perform general or specialized fiscal duties in a wide variety of financial areas including accounting, contracts, grants, or other financial review work for a state agency. Positions may also assist with the implementation and operation of cash flow, cash management or investment programs.

As stated in *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the PRB set out the hierarchy for position allocations. The first allocating criteria is the Category Concept (Class Series Concept). In this matter the majority of Mr. Sadeghian's duties clearly meet the class series concept of the Fiscal Analyst series.

As stated in the Class Series Concept for the FA series incumbents conduct a variety of financial reviews and analysis of fiscal, grants contracts or other financial data. The incumbents are professionals that analyze and interpret the fiscal information in order to draw conclusions. In his position, Mr. Sadeghian reviews, analyzes, verifies, interprets and processes tuition payment transactions. He works closely with Financial Aid staff to ensure actual financial aid awards are correctly reflected in student records. Based on these facts, the overall scope of duties performed by Mr. Sadeghian meet the intent of the Fiscal Analyst class series concept.

The next allocating criteria pursuant to *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University* is the definition of the relevant classes. As stated previously, it has been determined the classes reviewed are the FA 1 and 2. In order for Mr. Sadeghian's duties to meet the definition of the FA 2, the duties must be performed at the journey, occupational or working level of the series. OFM-SHR has defined journey level as:

Fully competent and qualified in all aspects of a body of work and given broad/general guidance. Individuals can complete work assignments to standard under general supervision. Also referred to as the working or fully-qualified level.

While it is true Mr. Sadeghian is performing his duties at the journey level, or in other words, he is performing such duties at fully-qualified level, the duties being performed do not meet the remainder of the FA 2 definition. The duties performed by Mr. Sadeghian are not general or specialized fiscal duties, nor is he performing duties related to accounting, contracts or financial review work for a state agency (or higher education institute). The duties being performed by Mr. Sadeghian are performed under general direction and he is required to analyze and interpret reoccurring reports, produced by an automated or manual financial system. He works with the Financial Aid department to "Process/adjust student financial aid award as directed by Financial Aid staff or available report so as to accurately reflect the actual award applied for students." This duty is performed in concert and with the support of the Financial Aid department. He may perform the duties independently after the report is received or after he is directed, but the process stems from established reports and procedures.

Furthermore, reviewing, analyzing, verifying, interpreting and processing tuition payments is not considered "general or specialized fiscal duties in a wide variety of financial areas." The duties performed are specific to tuition payments and are performed in order to provide accurate customer service. More to the point, although the incumbent states in his PRR (Exhibit B-3) that he possesses the needed educational background and the competencies to perform the higher level work and 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. (See *Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University*, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994))

As stated by the PRB in *Kristin Mansfield vs. Department of Fish and Wildlife*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-11-014 (2014), that absent distinguishing characteristics, we can look to typical work statements for guidance. In this matter, there are several typical work statements that speak to the duties performed by Mr. Sadeghian, such as developing and recommending procedures to improve operations, reviewing and processing of payments, analyzing and correcting discrepancies, maintaining and monitoring grants, etc. All of the aforementioned duties meet the FA 1 classification.

Based on the foregoing information and after careful review of the information contained in the file, I have determined the primary function of Mr. Sadeghian's position and the majority of his duties in their entirety fall within the scope and level of responsibility stated in the Class Series Concept and Definition for the Fiscal Analyst 1 class. Therefore, his overall level and scope of assigned duties and responsibilities are consistent with Fiscal Analyst 1 level work.

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: Mike Sadeghian, Appellant
Aaron Hilliard, VP of Human Resources

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

MIKE SADEGHIAN v BELLEVUE COLLEGE
ALLO-17-063

LIST OF EXHIBITS

A. Mike Sadeghian Exhibits

1. Request for Director's Review {Pages 1-2}
2. Letter to Office of State Human Resources Director {Pages 3-4}
3. Classification Analysis Report, dated November 1, 2016 {Pages 5-6}
4. Letter to Jennifer Carnahan and Position Review Request Employee Portion {Pages 7-14}
5. Classification Analysis Report, dated July 7, 2017 {Pages 15-16}
6. Email from Aaron Hilliard/Classification Analysis Report {Pages 17-20}
7. Bellevue College Fiscal Analyst 3, Job Description {Pages 21-24}
8. Mike Sadeghian's written argument

B. Bellevue College Exhibits

1. Position Review - Aaron Hilliard
2. Classification Analysis Report - David Hall
3. Position Review Request form
4. Signed and dated Supervisor Review Section of PRR
5. Fiscal Analyst 1
6. Fiscal Analyst 2
7. Organizational chart
8. Notes
9. Notes
10. Notes

C. Class Specifications

1. Fiscal Analyst 1
2. Fiscal Analyst 2