BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

PAMELA HILDEBRAND, Appellant, vs. HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY, Respondent.	)	CASE NO. R-ALLO-10-013 ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came before the Personnel Resources Board, LAURA ANDERSON, Chair; DJ MARK, Vice Chair; and JOSEPH PINZONE, Member, for a hearing on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated May 25, 2010. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Resources Board in Olympia, Washington, on August 18, 2010.

Appearances. Appellant Pamela Hildebrand was present and represented herself *pro se.* Respondent Health Care Authority (HCA) was represented by Jonnita Thompson, Human Resources Consultant.

Background. In January 2007, Appellant's supervisor submitted a Position Description Form to HCA's Human Resources Office requesting that Appellant's position be reallocated to the Information Technology Specialist 3 classification. The request was approved and Appellant's position was reallocated effective January 29, 2007.

In April and May 2008, Appellant completed a Job Analysis Worksheet for her position. Her supervisor reviewed the worksheet and submitted it to HCA's Human Resources office so that the allocation of the position could again be reviewed.

The review of Appellant's position was suspended while the Information Services (IS) Program evaluated the various disciplines of the Information Technology Specialist class series to determine if a business analyst discipline fit within HCA. In addition to reviewing Appellant's

allocation, HCA's Human Resources staff reviewed the ITS 4 and ITS 5 job classifications. HCA concluded that the majority of Appellant's duties involved technical work to independently develop websites, coordinate web projects, and provide web development consultation. HCA determined that Appellant's position did not rise to the level described by the ITS 4 or ITS 5 classifications. By letter dated July 10, 2009, HCA notified Appellant that her position was properly allocated to the ITS 3 class.

On August 6, 2009, Appellant filed a request for a director's review of HCA's allocation determination. By letter dated May 25, 2010, the director's designee determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the ITS 3 classification. On June 24, 2010, Appellant filed exceptions to the director's determination. In her exceptions appeal, Appellant asked that her position be reallocated to the ITS 5 classification. During the hearing on her exceptions, Appellant clarified that her request is to be allocated to the ITS 5 classification or at a minimum, to the ITS 4 class.

Appellant is the supervisor of HCA's web team. Appellant's working title is Web Manager/Webmaster. She is responsible for managing the "look and feel" of HCA's external and internal websites and establishing naming conventions, file and folder structures. She uses web applications such as DreamWeaver, Fuze, and Ruby on Rails to develop and maintain web pages and connect databases to the websites. She manages and supports web-related technical incidents by investigating, resolving, and responding to public inquiries; serving as agency lead for website domain name convention; managing File Transfer Protocol (FTP) with the Washington State Department of Information Services (DIS) and ensuring safe data transfer; managing efforts to conduct traffic studies, analyzing data and trends and recommending improvements to public-facing website; and overseeing quality control of external web properties.

Summary of Appellant's Arguments. In summary, Appellant argues that she has primary responsibility for the internal and external websites as a whole and that the HCA's Information

Services (IS) program has limited interaction with the websites. Appellant asserts that when IS receives a service call concerning the website, the calls are forwarded to her shop and she or her staff take care of the necessary changes to the website system. Appellant argues that her position is strategic in consulting with HCA programs regarding program content and new functionality for the website and then she determines the website capacity and functionality needed for the content. Appellant further argues that she does not follow established procedures; rather, she establishes the procedures to be followed by others. Appellant explains that she primarily uses Ruby on Rails for the websites and argues that no one in IS works with this product or understands how the websites function. Appellant contends that she is the primary contact for the HCA website domain, she is responsible for assuring that the websites will function on the host server which is maintained by the Washington State Department of Information Systems outside of HCA's IS department. Appellant argues that the website is a large scale, mission critical project with wide area impact. Appellant further argues that she functions as the senior level specialist for website functionality for lines of service that are core to the mission of the agency and that potentially impact every Washington state resident. Appellant asserts that her position fits within the ITS5 classification.

Summary of Respondent's Arguments. In summary, Respondent argues that the website is not a mission critical service or activity and that if the website were down, there are other manners in which staff and customers can obtain information. Respondent concurs that Appellant is the point of contact with DIS for the website but explains that DIS manages the server on which the website is hosted. Respondent further explains that Appellant is responsible for functionality of the website at the frontend which includes the look and feel of the website; while HCA's IS staff are responsible for the backend of the website for performing transactions and storing information. Respondent acknowledges that the website has organization-wide impact but argues that it is not an enterprise system crossing multiple platforms, that Appellant does not oversee the daily operations of an enterprise system, and that while she is responsible for the intranet and internet websites and she identifies and resolves operations problems, she does not do so for a high risk system as described by the ITS 5 classification. Respondent also acknowledges that Appellant functions as a senior level

specialist, exercises judgment, operates as a project leader, and utilizes a specialized technical knowledge for Ruby on Rails. Respondent argues, however, that the website is not a large scale project as envisioned at the ITS 4 classification, and Appellant is not involved designing multiple service systems, does not provide agency-wide information technology training because her position is limited scope, and does not represent agency-wide computing standards and philosophy at meetings. Therefore Respondent asserts that Appellant does not perform the level of work encompassed by the ITS 4 level. Respondent contends that while the website is important, the level of complexity of the functions and work Appellant performs fit within the ITS 3 classification.

Primary Issue. Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 3 classification should be affirmed.

Relevant Classifications. Information Technology Specialist 3, class code 479K; Information Technology Specialist 4, class code 479L; Information Technology Specialist 5, class code 479M.

Decision of the Board. 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).

The following standards, in descending order, are the primary considerations in allocating positions:

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

- Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other classes in the series in question.

There is no dispute that Appellant's position fits with the Information Technology Specialist class series.

The definition for Information Technology Specialist 5 states:

> This is the supervisory or expert level. Provides expert consultation and specialized analysis, design, development, acquisition, installation, maintenance, programming, testing, quality assurance, troubleshooting, and/or problem resolution tasks for major organization-wide, high risk/high impact, or mission-critical applications computing and/or telecommunication systems, projects, databases or database management systems; support products, or operational problems.
>
> Performs highly-complex tasks such as conducting capacity planning to determine organization-wide needs and make recommendations; designing complex agency- or institution-wide enterprise systems crossing multiple networks, platforms or telecommunication environments; overseeing the daily operations of large-scale or enterprise systems; identifying and resolving operational problems for major high risk systems with centralized, organization-wide functions; testing multi-dimensional applications, providing quality assurance; developing standards or enhancing existing, high risk and impact, mission critical applications; integrating business solutions, or writing feasibility studies and decision packages for high visibility/impact initiatives.
>
> Provides leadership and expert consultation for large-scale projects or enterprise systems that often integrate new technology and/or carry out organization-wide information technology functions, or impact other institutions or agencies. Provides project management leadership, technical expertise and demonstrates knowledge of project management practices, principles, and skills.
>
> May supervise information technology specialists or function as a recognized expert who is sought out by others in resolving or assessing controversial or precedent-setting issues.

Appellant is not responsible for a high risk/high impact or mission-critical application. Therefore, her position does not fit within the ITS 5 classification.

The definition for Information Technology Specialist 4 states:

> Performs analysis, system design, acquisition, installation, maintenance, programming, project management, quality assurance, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and/or consulting tasks for complex computing system, application, data access/retrieval, multi-functional databases or database management systems, telecommunication, project or operational problems.
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> As a senior-level specialist in an assigned area of responsibility and/or as a team or project leader, applies advanced technical knowledge and considerable discretion to evaluate and resolve complex tasks such as planning and directing large-scale projects; conducting capacity planning; designing multiple-server systems; directing or facilitating the installation of complex systems, hardware, software, application interfaces, or applications; developing and implementing quality assurance testing and performance monitoring; planning, administering, and coordinating organization-wide information technology training; acting as a liaison on the development of applications; representing institution-wide computing and/or telecommunication standards and philosophy at meetings; or developing security policies and standards.
>
> Incumbents understand the customer's business from the perspective of a senior business person and are conversant in the customer's business language. Projects assigned to this level impact geographical groupings of offices/facilities, and/or regional, divisional, or multiple business units with multiple functions. The majority of tasks performed have wide-area impact, integrate new technology, and/or affect how the mission is accomplished.

Some of Appellant's duties and responsibilities are described by the ITS 4 level, but as a whole, a majority of her duties and responsibilities do not reach the level of complexity, large-scale size or wide-area impact encompassed by the definition of ITS 4 classification. Therefore, her position does not fit within the ITS 4 class.

WAC 357-13-055 provides that: "[a]llocations or reallocations must be based upon a review and analysis of the duties and responsibilities of the position." And, WAC 357-13-050 provides that: "[t]he employer must allocate or reallocate each classified position to an established class in the classification plan."

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. Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

We recognize that each classification within the state personnel system encompasses a range of duties. The multiple positions allocated to each class typically do not perform the full scope or range of duties described in the classification. In this case, we recognize that some of Appellant's duties are described by the ITS 4 class. However, this class does not provide the best fit overall for her position.

The definition for Information Technology Specialist 3 states:

> In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility, independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation, maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.
>
> Uses established work procedures and innovative approaches to complete assignments and coordinate projects such as conducting needs assessments; leading projects; creating installation plans; analyzing and correcting network malfunctions; serving as system administrator; monitoring or enhancing operating environments; or supporting, maintaining and enhancing existing applications.
>
> The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-level technical staff to resolve complex problems.

The majority of Appellant's assignment and projects are moderate in size and impact internal and external users. In addition, the typical work for the ITS 3 class encompasses the majority of her work, including her supervisory responsibilities. Appellant's position best fits within the ITS 3 classification.

In a hearing on exceptions, the appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. Appellant has failed to meet her burden of proof.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Pamela Hildebrand is denied and the director's determination dated May 25, 2010, is affirmed.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2010.

WASHINGTON P ERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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LAURA ANDERSON, Chair

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DJ MARK, Vice Chair

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JOSEPH PINZONE, Member