BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

GAYLE ASHWORTH, Appellant, vs. WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Respondent.	CASE NO. R-ALLO-14-022 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, NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair, and SUSAN MILLER, Member, for a hearing on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated November 4, 2014. The hearing was held on March 5, 2015.

Appearances. Appellant Gayle Ashworth was present and was represented by Desiree Desselle, Labor Advocate with the Washington Federation of State Employees. Lisa Gehring, Associate Director for Human Resources appeared by telephone and represented Respondent Washington State University (WSU).

Background. On October 10, 2013, WSU's Human Resources (HR) office received a request to reallocate Appellant's Program Coordinator position. The request was initiated by management of the WSU 4-H Foundation. By memorandum dated November 13, 2013, Respondent determined that Appellant's position should be reallocated to the Fiscal Specialist 2 classification.

On December 9, 2013, the Office of State Human Resources received Appellant's request for a director's review of WSU's allocation determination. In her review request letter, Appellant indicated that she did not believe that HR saw her full job description.

By letter dated November 4, 2014, the director's designee determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Fiscal Specialist 2 classification.

On November 17, 2014, Appellant filed exceptions to the director's designee's determination. Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

Appellant is employed by WSU but works for the WSU Extension 4-H foundation and serves as the foundation's financial specialist. She handles all the financial responsibilities for the foundation including developing budget documents for submittal with the grants, developing and signing all sub-agreements with WSU and other stakeholders, submitting all federal and state reports and updating and developing policies for the 4-H Board of Trustees' approval. She also sends invoices for payments, reconciles all accounts, develops accounting systems for the Foundation, compares financial information with the overall budget to ensure spending aligns with the budget and ensure funding does not exceed $500,000 in a year. In addition, she provides information to an outside auditor in compliance with federal regulations and works with an independent investment manager regarding investment funds for the foundation.

Summary of Appellant's Arguments. Appellant argues that the position description (PD) used by WSU does not accurately reflect the work she performs. Appellant asserts that she performs fiscal duties and responsibilities 90% of the time and that the majority of these duties are best described by the Fiscal Analyst 2 classification. Appellant explains that WSU agreed that her PD was not an accurate description of the percentages of her work and contends that an error was made when neither WSU nor the director's designee reviewed her fiscal duties to determine what percentage rose to the higher level work encompassed by the Fiscal Analyst class series.

Summary of Respondent's Arguments. Respondent does not dispute that 90% of Appellant's work involves fiscal duties and responsibilities. However, Respondent contends that the majority of these duties fall within the Fiscal Specialist 2 classification. Respondent asserts that the majority of Appellant's duties involve analyzing and developing budgets for grants, establishing and maintaining comprehensive fiscal record keeping systems, fiscal planning, and coordinating diverse unit-wide fiscal support functions such as travel reimbursements. Respondent recognizes that Appellant works independently under the general direction of her supervisor which is consistent

with the Fiscal Specialist 2 classification. Respondent acknowledges that Appellant performs some higher level fiscal duties but asserts that the preponderance of her work does not involve analyzing and interpreting fiscal information to draw conclusions and identify trends or determining relationships between variables by generating items, choosing analysis, translating data or explaining the results to taking appropriate action based upon the analysis as required for allocation to the Fiscal Analyst series. Respondent argues that the preponderance of Appellant's duties fall within the definition of the Fiscal Specialist 2 classification.

Primary Issue. Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Fiscal Specialist 2 classification should be affirmed.

Relevant Classifications. Fiscal Specialist 2, class code 151F, and Fiscal Analyst 2, class code 143J.

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).

WAC 357-13-030 requires employers to maintain a current position description for each position. WAC 357-13-045 states that "[t]he manager of the position is responsible for completing the position description form. If the position is filled, input from the incumbent is recommended." Further, because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved position description, the position description becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities as documented in the position description. ***See*** Bottcher v.

Dept. of Social and Health Services, PRB No. R-ALLO-14-001 (2014) citing to Lawrence v. Dept. of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

In this case, the parties agree that the position description for Appellant's position and submitted as part of the record in this appeal is inaccurate. Further, because an updated description was not offered to the director's designee, it appears that an accurate description does not exist. Without an accurate description of Appellant's duties during the time period relevant to the reallocation request, including a categorization of those duties that constitute higher level fiscal duties and those that are administrative in nature, an accurate assessment of the proper allocation of her position cannot be made. Therefore, the parties should be directed to develop an accurate position description for the duties and responsibilities Appellant performed during the time period relevant to the reallocation request.

In addition, the record before the Board does not clearly establish the organizational structure and reporting relationships between Appellant's position and her supervisor, the 4-H Board of Trustees, management of WSU's state-wide Extension Program, and the College of Agricultural Human and Natural Resource Sciences. Therefore, the parties should be directed to provide a depiction of the organizational structure and reporting relationships beginning with Appellant's position to establish a clear understanding of the level of supervision and oversight Appellant received and from whom when performing her fiscal duties and responsibilities.

Further, this matter should be remanded to the Director of State Human Resources for further analysis and determination of the proper allocation of Appellant's position. When the parties have created and approved an accurate position description for Appellant's position and have created a clear depiction of the organizational and reporting relationship described above, the information should be provided to the Director's Review Program for further analysis by the Director's designee. If either party disagrees with the determination of the Director's designee, the matter may be appealed to the Board on exceptions to the Director's determination.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Gayle Ashworth is remanded to the Director of State Human Resources.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that within sixty (60) days of that date of this order, the parties shall provide the Director's Review Program with:

- An accurate position description depicting Appellant's duties and responsibilities during the time period relevant to the reallocation request, including a categorization of those duties that constituted higher level fiscal duties and those that were administrative in nature and
- A depiction of the organizational structure and reporting relationships for Appellant's position showing her position, her supervisor, the 4-H Board of Trustees, management of WSU's state-wide Extension Program, and the College of Agricultural Human and Natural Resource Sciences.

IT IS ALSO ORDERED that upon receipt of the information noted above, the Director's designee shall conduct further analysis and issue a determination addressing the proper allocation of Appellant's position. The designee may determine whether the matter requires further discussion with the parties or whether the matter can be decided based on the information submitted.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2015.

WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair

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SUSAN MILLER, Member