BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, Appellant, vs. SAREN WARDREP, Respondent.	CASE NO.: R-ALLO-17-037 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; VICKY BOWDISH, Vice Chair; and SUSAN MILLER, Member, for a hearing on Appellant's exceptions to the Director's Determination dated November 15, 2017. The hearing was held on August 9, 2018.

Appearances. Appellant, Bonnie Dennler and Jon Hurd, appeared by phone for Washington State University (WSU). Respondent, Saren Wardrep, appeared by phone.

Background. On March 13, 2017, Ms. Wardrep's Position Review Request was received by WSU Human Resources requesting her position be reallocated to Fiscal Analyst 3. By memorandum dated July 6, 2017, Ms. Wardrep's request to be allocated from a Fiscal Analyst 2 to a Fiscal Analyst 3 had been denied. On July 17, 2017, Ms. Wardrep filed a Request for Director's Review of WSU HR's allocation denial. On January 9, 2018, Appellant WSU, filed an appeal to the Director's Determination dated November 15, 2017. The Director's Review determination reallocated Ms. Wardrep to a Fiscal Analyst 3.

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Summary Position Objective. The incumbent of this position serves as a Fiscal Analyst 3 located at WSU in the Business and Finance Department, College of Agricultural Human & Natural Resource Sciences (CAHRNS). Ms. Wardrep's position includes but is not limited to working with the CAHRNS and Extension Area Grants Manager in coordination with the Team to provide specialized grant support to faculty and staff in WSU Extension in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The position is responsible for coordinating research and extension grants involving other colleges and universities, review and approving grant budgets, advising faculty, Principal Investigators, and administrators on preparation of grant and proposals, and provides assistance and interpretation of funding agency and institutional regulations and policies to faculty and staff.

Summary of Appellant's Argument. Appellant argues the Respondent's position does not reach the level of "specialist" to warrant reallocation to a Fiscal Analyst 3 position. Appellant's interpretation of "specialist" is from the definition that states, "Duties involve intensive application of knowledge and skills in a specific segment of an occupational area." Ms. Wardrep's duties performed for both the pre and post grant award process are conducted using specific set of guidelines developed and controlled by the Office of Research Support and Operations (ORSO) which is the centralized University office responsible for all submitted proposals and awards acceptance across WSU. Additionally, within the CAHNRS Business and Finance office there are set guidelines related to activities supporting the "college-level" review of fiscal, budget and administrative responsibility for grants submitted by and awarded to the college. The knowledge and skills required for the position does not require intensive application knowledge and skill in specific segment of an occupational area. Rather, the position requires extensive knowledge of guidelines, processes, and the application of administrative grant support. Based on the specific processes and guidelines set forth by ORSO for conducting grant administration activities within CAHNRS and WSU as a whole, the best fit for Ms. Wardrep's duties continue to be within the Fiscal Analyst 2 classification.

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Summary of Respondent's (Wardrep) Arguments. Respondent argues the Director's Review Specialist correctly analyzed her duties and came to the correct conclusion that the Respondent is properly allocated to Fiscal Analyst 3. Respondent acknowledges that ORSO is the centralized office that established internal pre-award grant processing procedures specific to WSU, however, ORSO is bound to adhere to the same guidelines as all grant coordinators for every proposal submitted to an external funding agency. These overarching guidelines are not established nor governed by WSU or ORSO, and grant coordinators are expected to be knowledgeable about these rules whether working in colleges or departments, centralized university offices, private companies, federal and state agencies, or foundations. Respondent's position manages grants from "cradle to grave" which encompasses the proposal, award period, fiscal/administrative support, and final closeout. There are specific rules in each individual Request for Proposal which require analysis and interpretation in relation to federal, state, and other agency guidelines. Each proposal is unique, and demands specialized knowledge to submit successfully.

Primary Issue. Whether the Director's determination properly allocated the Respondent's position to the Fiscal Analyst 3 classification.

Relevant Classifications. Fiscal Analyst 2 and Fiscal Analyst 3.

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.

Fiscal Analyst 3

Definition

This is the senior, specialist or leadworker level of the series. Leadworker positions lead fiscal related professional staff conducting financial reviews and analysis of fiscal data, grants or contracts in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles [GAAP]. Senior positions independently plan, coordinate and conduct fiscal, grants or contractual reviews of the more comprehensive fiscal or manual accounting systems in accordance with GAAP, statutes or regulations. Positions can also coordinate and direct cash flows or investment activities of an agency.

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 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.
d) Class Series Concept, Definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other classes in the series in question.[1]

While not allocating criteria, typical work statements of a class lend support and provide clarification of type and scope of work encompassed in a class.

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[1] *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008).

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Based on the hierarchy outlined in *Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University*, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the Respondent does not meet the definition for the Fiscal Analyst 3 classification.

In a hearing on exceptions, the Appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. Appellant has met their burden of proof by the Board.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Appellant is granted and the Director's Determination dated November 15, 2017, is overturned.

DATED this 6th day of November, 2018.

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NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair

Vicky Bowdish

VICKY BOWDISH, Vice-Chair

Susan L. Miller

SUSAN MILLER, Member

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Respondent emphasizes her duties require analysis and interpretation in relation to federal, state, and other agency guidelines and that each Request for Proposal (RFP) is unique and demands specialized knowledge to submit successfully. The Respondent considers grant coordination a specific segment of an occupational area because it falls within the broader categories of administrative and fiscal support. The Respondent states she is tasked with interpreting subtleties in RFP's and award documents which often requires intense scrutiny and application of specialized knowledge.

However, it is important to note, the Appellant explained ORSO is a centralized unit which administers grants for the institution as a whole. Ms. Wardrep's position does not report to ORSO as the centralized grant and contract service for WSU.

Ms. Wardrep's position requires an extensive knowledge of guidelines, processes, and the application of fiscal, administrative, and budget reviews. Within the definition for the Fiscal Analyst 2 it states, "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." The duties performed by the Respondent are consistent with the Fiscal Analyst 2 level work.

Furthermore, the duties performed in Ms. Wardrep's position require knowledge and skills in a wide variety of financial areas, however, it does not require intensive knowledge or skill in a specific segment of an occupational area. In order for the Appellant to meet the definition of the Fiscal Analyst 3 and specifically rise to the level of being a "specialist", her duties must involve intensive application of knowledge and skills in a specific segment of an occupational area. Job duties are performed using a specific set of guidelines developed and controlled by ORSO. For these reasons, the Respondent does not meet the classification for Fiscal Analyst 3.

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