

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD
STATE OF WASHINGTON

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY,)
Appellant,) CASE NO. R-ALLO-16-009
vs.) ORDER OF THE BOARD
DEBORAH STRAND,) FOLLOWING HEARING ON
Respondent.) EXCEPTIONS TO THE
DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Resources Board, NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair, and SUSAN MILLER, Vice Chair, on Central Washington University's exceptions to the director's determination dated May 26, 2016. The hearing was held on October 5, 2016, in room 301 of the Raad Building, 128 10th Avenue SW. Olympia, Washington.

Appearances. Appellant Central Washington University (CWU) was represented by Lorraine Chavez, CWU Human Resources (HR) was present by telephone. Respondent Deborah Strand was present by telephone. Respondent was represented by Jason Mackay, Assistant General Counsel for Public School Employees of Washington (PSE). Mr. MacKay was present by telephone.

Background. Ms. Strand's position was allocated to the class of Secretary Senior. On October 15, 2015, she submitted a Position Review Request Form requesting that her position be reallocated to a higher classification. On December 11, 2015, CWU informed Ms. Strand that her position was properly allocated. On January 7, 2016, Ms. Strand requested a director's review of her position. On April 21, 2016, OFM State HR conducted a director's review. By letter dated May 26, 2016, the director's designee notified CWU that Ms. Strand's position should be reallocated to the Administrative Assistant 2 classification (AA 2).

1 On June 22, 2016, CWU filed timely exceptions to the director's determination. CWU's exceptions
2 are the subject of this proceeding.

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4 At the time of Ms. Strand's request for reallocation, Ms. Strand's position was located under
5 College of Education and Professional Studies, within the Educational Foundations and
6 Curriculum Department (EFC) at CWU.

7
8 Ms. Strand is supervised by and reports to Dr. Loverro, EFC Chair. Ms. Strand provides a variety
9 of services and information to students, the public and faculty which includes information on
10 how to become a certified teacher. Ms. Strand serves as the main contact for the academic
11 department.

12
13 The majority of Ms. Strand's duties and responsibilities include:

- 14 • Independently advising students on:
 - 15 ○ Professional Education Program (PEP)
 - 16 ○ transferring requirements, tracking, troubleshooting and rectifying
17 student enrollment issues;
 - 18 ○ providing faculty, program participants and/or the public information
19 about program content, policies, procedures and activities;
 - 20 ○ Selecting/recommending alternative courses of action.
- 21 • Reconciling and monitoring the EFC budget, performing budget forecasting,
22 preparing budget estimates;
- 23 • Forecasting enrollment based on historical data;
- 24 • Tracking non-tenured faculty contracts to ensure they do not exceed their limitations
25 and, if needed, facilitates a new contract;
- 26 • Making decisions regarding office administration and operations; and
- 27 • Strategizing with the department chair and faculty on interpretation of
28 policies.
- 29

1 **Summary of CWU's Arguments.** CWU argues that the director's designee erred in that Ms.
2 Strand's position does not fit the AA 2 class series concept based on the majority of duties and
3 responsibilities of the position. CWU argues that the majority of duties and responsibilities Ms.
4 Strand performs, such as independently planning, organizing and prioritizing work; monitoring and
5 evaluating budgets and initiating corrections, travel reimbursements and authorizations; compiling
6 reports, studies, and/or applications; tracking enrollment; establishing office procedures and
7 coordinating office operations within the EFC; are to ensure that the work unit and/or office goals
8 are met. CWU further argues that Ms. Strand supports her supervisor by providing secretarial
9 services and assistance for the purpose of relieving Dr. Loverro in the day-to-day clerical details.
10 CWU asserts the nature, complexity and scope of duties are in general compliance and are best
11 described by the Secretary Senior classification. CWU contends that Ms. Strand's duties,
12 responsibilities, and scope of impact are best described by the Secretary Senior classification.

13
14 **Summary of Ms. Strand's Arguments.** Ms. Strand explained that she has been performing higher
15 level duties for approximately two years within the EFC Department. Ms. Strand contends that her
16 position has moved away from traditional secretarial duties and is more administrative in nature.
17 She argues that the vast majority of her time is performing specialized duties in support of the
18 EFC, particularly with teacher certifications in the PEP. Ms. Strand argues that the director's
19 designee appropriately weighed her duties and responsibilities and determined that her overall
20 scope of work and level of responsibility supported reallocation of her position. Ms. Strand asserts
21 that scope of duties and level of responsibilities of her position are best described by the
22 Administrative Assistant 2 classification.

23
24 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated
25 to the Administrative Assistant 2 classification should be affirmed.

26
27 **Relevant Classification.** Secretary Senior class code, 100T, and Administrative Assistant 2, class
28 code 105F.

1 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification
2 best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a
3 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which
4 that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a
5 particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a
6 determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the
7 position. See *Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994)*.

8
9 Secretary Class Series Concept

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

18 Ms. Strand does not facilitate Dr. Loverro's work and relieve him of day-to-day clerical detail. She
19 Does not spend the majority of her time performing routine secretarial duties such as making travel
20 arrangements, scheduling meetings and/or classes, taking notes and transcribing minutes, keeping
21 supervisors and/or staff member's calendar(s), producing final copy documents from drafts and
22 composing forms and letters. Rather, Ms. Strand has been designated a portion of the EFC's work.
23 She functions independently on her portion of departmental responsibilities and refers to Dr. Loverro
24 on an as-needed basis or for authorization on questionable or unusual issues. Similarly, Dr. Loverro
25 refers to Ms. Strand for information and advice to help him make informed decisions.

26 Administrative Assistant 2 Definition:

27 Provide administrative and staff support services for a section or unit with delegated
28 authority to act in supervisor's absence in areas of substance.
29

1 Administrative Assistant 2 Distinguishing Characteristics:

2 These positions may be distinguished from lower level classes by addition of the
3 delegation of authority to **act for or in the regular place of the superior in substantive**
4 **areas, and/or supervision of some professional or several clerical subordinates and a**
5 **formal reporting alignment identifying the position as the principal administrative**
6 **assistant to the superior who is at the first professional supervisory level or above.**
7 (emphasis added)
8

9 The basic function for the Administrative Assistant classification states:

10 Provide staff support to the chief administrator or head of a major organizational
11 unit such as a school, college or major academic or administrative department.
12 Represent the administrator and/or unit's goals and interests and provide and/or
13 coordinate functions such as budget and space management/analysis, grant and
14 contract proposal preparation, records management, student services and/or
15 personnel administration.
16

17 Ms. Strand performs duties encompassed by the class series concept and basic function of the
18 Administrative Assistant 2 classification. She reports to the chair of the EFC. She is responsible for
19 the technical portions delegated by Dr. Loverro and she serves as his liaison. For example, she
20 performs a variety of budgetary duties such as monitoring, reconciling, initiating, and approving
21 expenditures, assisting Dr. Loverro with budgeting and allocating monies within the department.
22 She is often expected to troubleshoot and solve routine problems and advise students, faculty and
23 the public. Dr. Loverro relies upon her to field questions and resolve problems concerning
24 enrollment, scheduling, adding and dropping classes, and a variety of other issues. Her duties
25 include advising students, monitoring and rectifying enrollment in the department's classes,
26 troubleshooting registration issues, managing the flow of the faculty recruitment process and
27 monitoring and projecting budgets for the department.
28
29

1 The Administrative Assistant 2 classification encompasses the majority and complexity of Ms.
2 Strand's duties, level of responsibility, decision making authority and level of independence.

3 Ms. Strand's duties, such as budget development advising, troubleshooting, tracking and
4 recommending solutions to the EFC are considered higher level assignments. These duties
5 constitute a majority of her overall duties and responsibilities.

6
7 Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more
8 than one classification. However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific
9 position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and
10 the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall for the
11 majority of the position's duties and responsibilities. Dudley v Dept. of Labor and Industries, R-
12 ALLO-07-007 (2007).

13
14 In this case, the Administrative Assistant 2 classification best encompasses the level, scope and
15 diversity of Ms. Strand's overall duties and responsibilities.

16
17 This decision is based on the duties and delegated responsibilities of Ms. Strand's position within
18 the EFC department by the chair, who manages the operations of the department. The majority of
19 Ms. Strand's duties and responsibilities are consistent with the Administrative Assistant 2
20 classification.

21
22 In a hearing on exceptions, the Appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. Appellant has
23 failed to meet the burden of proof. The Administrative Assistant 2 classification best describes the
24 overall duties and responsibilities of Respondent's position.

ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Central Washington University is denied, the director’s determination dated May 26, 2016, is upheld and Respondent’s position remains allocated to the Administrative Assistant 2 job class.

DATED this ____ day of _____, 2016.

WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

NANCY HOLLAND YOUNG, Chair

SUSAN MILLER, Vice Chair