BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

JAMES BOECKSTIEGEL, Appellant, v. UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Respondent.	Case No. ALLO-03-0004 ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair; GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair; and BUSSE NUTLEY, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the Director's determination dated January 30, 2003. The hearing was held on September 24, 2003, at the University of Washington, South Campus Center, Seattle, Washington.

Appearances. Appellant James Boeckstiegel was present and was represented by Julie Sakahara, Union Representative with the Washington Federation of State Employees. Jim West, Human Resource Representative, represented Respondent University of Washington.

Background. As a result of a local position review, Appellant's position as a Sprinkler Maintenance Worker was reallocated to the class of Maintenance Mechanic I. Appellant believed his position should have been reallocated to the class of Control Technician, and he requested a review of his position allocation with the Department of Personnel. On October 30, 2002, Kris Brophy conducted a verification interview. On January 30, 2003, the Department of Personnel

issued a determination that Appellant's position should be reallocated back to Sprinkler Maintenance Worker.

On February 5, 2003, Appellant filed exceptions with the Personnel Appeals Board claiming that his position should be allocated to Construction Assistant or Control Technician.

Summary of Appellant's Argument. Appellant asserts that when he was hired as a Maintenance Sprinkler Worker seven years ago, his duties fit the job specification accurately. Appellant asserts that in 1998, the nature of his job changed considerably due to changes and advancement in sprinklers systems that are now primarily operated by a computerized central control system. Appellant asserts that temporary employees perform the duties more in line with "sprinkler maintenance work" and that the scope of his position is to perform skilled work in the inspection, testing, servicing and maintenance related to sprinklers and sprinkler related equipment. Appellant contends that he works independently and sets his own goals and priorities. Therefore, Appellant asserts that his position should be reallocated to the Control Technician classification.

Appellant asserts that the Construction Assistant class is also appropriate because he assists in the design phase of irrigations projects and performs site inspections for new irrigations projects. Appellant argues that the work he performs far exceeds the Maintenance Mechanic class in complexity and responsibility.

Summary of Respondent's Argument. Respondent asserts that the Control Technician class is not appropriate here because the class is restricted to positions with duties relating to maintenance of mechanical, pneumatic, electronic and electron controls for heating, air-conditioning (HVAC) and related equipment. Respondent argues that the Construction Assistant class does not fit because Appellant's duties entail maintaining and servicing a complex, partially computerized sprinkler system, not performing site or construction inspections or coordinating construction projects.

Respondent argues Appellant works with sprinklers and sprinkler related equipment, and he employs electrical skills and knowledge related to the controls of the Rain Master computerized sprinkler system and water conservation needs.

Respondent acknowledges that no one class is a perfect fit for the duties performed by Appellant. Respondent also recognizes that some of Appellant's duties are beyond the Sprinkler Maintenance Worker class but argues that on a best-fit basis, the Maintenance Mechanic 1 is the appropriate classification in light of the available classes.

Primary Issue. Whether the Department of Personnel correctly concluded that Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Sprinkler Maintenance Worker.

Relevant Classifications. Sprinkler Maintenance Worker (class code 5463); Maintenance Mechanic I (class code 5242); Construction Assistant (class code 4683); and Control Technician (class code 5335).

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. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in similar positions. 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).

Appellant works in the Outside Zone of Plant Services. He reports to the Grounds Supervisor in the Grounds Maintenance Department. Appellant and his coworker serve the irrigation and water

conservation needs of the University of Washington campus. Appellant spends 45 percent of his time maintaining the automatic sprinkler system, which includes performing inspections, repairing and testing irrigation valves and sprinkler heads. Appellant also leads temporary workers.

Appellant spends 20 percent of his work time assisting landscape architects, irrigation contractors, construction coordinators and project managers on all phases of irrigation and landscape capital projects. This work includes consulting on product selection, reviewing blue prints for irrigation zone placement, performing on-site inspections and attending pre-construction meetings. Fifteen percent of Appellant's time is spent operating the irrigation central control system and his remaining time is spent on water conservation, administrative work and planning work assignments.

In the absence of a classification specification that clearly describes the exact nature of Appellant's work, we must identify the classification that most closely addresses the scope, range of duties and skills Appellant performs. To determine the class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of Appellant's position, we have considered all relevant classifications, including Construction Assistant, Control Technician, Maintenance Mechanic and Sprinkler Maintenance Worker.

Appellant has failed to meet his burden of proving that either the Construction Assistant or Control Technician classes are more appropriate classes for the work he performs. The Control Technician class requires performing skilled work on HVAC systems, and Appellant clearly does not inspect, test, service or maintain heating or air-conditioning equipment. The Class Series for the Construction Assistant class requires the employee to perform site or construction inspections and coordinate the construction phase of building construction, renovation and utility projects from beginning through warranty. Appellant does not perform site, construction inspections or coordinate the construction phase of a building, renovation or utility project.

The Sprinkler Maintenance Work class requires the employee to perform duties involving sprinkler irrigation and maintenance in a comprehensive maintenance program. Typical work includes installing, maintaining, repairing and adjusting various sprinkler systems and control devices; inspecting and repairing sprinkler systems; and reviewing sprinkler system maps. Appellant performs these typical duties; however, the scope of Appellant's duties and his level of responsibilities clearly go beyond the scope of duties intended in the Sprinkler Maintenance Worker class.

The definition of the Maintenance Mechanic I classification states, "[a]ssist journeyworker and/or perform work of a semi-skilled nature in the maintenance, repair, remodeling and construction of buildings, grounds, facilities and equipment." Appellant does not assist journeyworkers; however, he performs semi-skilled work on sprinkler equipment and the computerized sprinkler system, and he possesses electrical skills.

We understand the Maintenance Mechanic I class is not the perfect fit; however, in recognition of the multifaceted duties and tasks performed by Appellant, we conclude the Maintenance Mechanic I classification is the best fit under the circumstances.

Conclusion. Appellant's appeal should be granted in part, and his position should be reallocated to the Maintenance Mechanic I classification.

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ORDER

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal of James Boeckstiegel is granted in part, the Director's determination is reversed, and Appellant's position is reallocated to the class of Maintenance Mechanic I.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2003.

WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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Walter T. Hubbard, Chair

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Gerald L. Morgen, Vice Chair

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Busse Nutley, Member