

**BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD
STATE OF WASHINGTON**

ANA RONEY,
Appellant,

vs.

SPOKANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
Respondent.

CASE NO. R-ALLO-09-030

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, Vice Chair, and DJ MARK, Member, for a telephonic hearing on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated June 24, 2009. The hearing was held on November 12, 2009.

Appearances. Appellant Ana Roney was present and was represented by Desiree Desselle, Labor Advocate for the Washington Federation of State Employees. Spokane Community College (SCC) was represented by Michael Lenker, Human Resources Representative.

Background. Appellant's position was allocated to the Program Coordinator classification. She submitted a Position Review Request dated September 2, 2008 requesting reallocation to the Program Specialist 2 classification. By memorandum date October 16, 2008, SCC denied Appellant's request.

On November 10, 2008, Appellant filed a request for a director's review of SCC's allocation determination. By letter dated June 24, 2009, the director's designee determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Program Coordinator classification. On July 24, 2009, Appellant filed exceptions to the director's determination. Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

Appellant's position is located in the Workforce and Education Department. The Department is part of SCC's Student Services Community Career and Employment Services. The Department contains a variety of areas including the Worker Retraining, WorkFirst, Veterans Education, and Employer and Job Seeker Services. Appellant is responsible for coordinating the activities for Veterans Education. The focus of Appellant's position is to provide assistance to SCC students who are veterans eligible for GI Bill benefits. She uses knowledge specific to the Veterans Education unit to make decisions in carrying out program activities. In performing her duties she acts as a liaison with outside entities and has extensive involvement with students and others. She performs duties such as reviewing each veteran student's classes to determine applicability to his/her study program; interacting with students, department and campus staff in person, by phone or e-mail; and creating forms, a newsletter and other written materials. She develops procedures, which are reviewed by her supervisor, for use within the Veterans Education unit and she follows established processes and methods contained in state and federal laws to complete her work.

Summary of Appellant's Arguments. Appellant argues that she is the Veterans Education Program specialist and as such, she serves a subset of students with unique needs and assists them to assure they receive every benefit for which they are eligible. Appellant asserts she is responsible for activities such as determining student eligibility, monitoring attendance and grades, assuring students are enrolled in covered programs, developing corrective action plans for failing students, and determining how students will pay for courses including reviewing eligibility for tuition waivers or deferments. Appellant contends that she is responsible for assuring the program passes audits by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Workforce Training Board. Appellant contends that the Veterans Education Program is separate and discrete from the other programs within the Workforce and Education Department and that no other staff does her work or performs the liaison work she performs with outside entities on behalf of the program. Appellant further contends that she works with little guidance, independently develops policies and procedures which she then implements, develops various communication devices such as a website, newsletters and an information booklet, represents the program both on-campus

1 and off-campus, and interprets and applies state and federal regulations unique to the services the
2 program offers. Appellant argues that her position fits the definition of a specialist and that her
3 position best fits with the Program Specialist 2 classification.

4
5 **Summary of Respondent's Arguments.** Respondent acknowledges that Appellant is a highly
6 valued, respected employee whose services are appreciated. However, Respondent explains that the
7 position review process is not about performance. Respondent argues that the director's designee
8 was correct in her assessment of the classification specifications in question and how they are used
9 throughout the higher education system. Respondent asserts that Appellant's position does not fit
10 within the definition of a specialist and that she does not provide the full scope of benefits that are
11 available to veterans. Respondent further asserts that the Veterans Education Program is a sub-
12 portion of the activities of the Workforce and Education Department and that Appellant's
13 supervisor retains overall authority for the program, program audits, and procedural changes
14 within the program. Respondent agrees that Appellant provides information to students, but argues
15 that she does not provide academic counseling services, exercise academic approval authority or
16 exercise budgetary authority. Rather, Respondent argues that Appellant independently coordinates
17 the program and exercises independent judgment to assure that program services meet standards.
18 Respondent asserts that Appellant's position is properly allocated to the Program Coordinator
19 classification.

20
21 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated
22 to the Program Coordinator classification should be affirmed.

23
24 **Relevant Classifications.** Program Coordinator, class code 107N, Program Specialist 2, class code
25 107I.

26
27 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best
28 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a

1 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that
2 work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a
3 particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a
4 determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position.
5 See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

6
7 In Norton-Nader v. Western Washington University, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-08-020 (2008), the
8 Personnel Resources Board (Board) stated that the following standards are the hierarchy of
9 primary considerations in allocating positions:

- 10 a) Category concept (if one exists).
- 11 b) Definition or basic function of the class.
- 12 c) Distinguishing characteristics of a class.
- 13 d) Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics
14 of other classes in the series in question.

15 The class series concept for the Program Specialist classes states:

16 Positions in this series coordinate discrete, specialized programs consisting of
17 specific components and tasks that are unique to a particular subject and are
18 separate and distinguished from the main body of an organization. Positions
19 coordinate program services and resources; act as a program liaison and provide
20 consultation to program participants and outside entities regarding functions of the
21 program; interpret, review and apply program specific policies, procedures and
22 regulations; assess program needs; and develop courses of action to carry out
23 program activities. Program coordination also requires performance of tasks and
24 application of knowledge unique to the program and not transferable or applicable
25 to other areas of the organization.

26 Examples of program areas may include, but are not limited to: business
27 enterprises, fund raising, volunteer services, community resources, election
28 administration and certification, juvenile delinquency prevention, recreational
29 education and safety, energy education, aeronautic operations and safety, student
housing, financial aid, and registration.

Appellant performs discrete, specialized tasks that are unique to the Veterans Education Program.
However, the Veterans Education Program is not separate and distinguished from the main body
of the organization. Rather, the program is a component of the Workforce and Education

1 Department within Student Services Community Career and Employment Services. The Veterans
2 Education Program does not contain the depth or breadth of components and tasks encompassed
3 by the Program Specialist class series concept. While Appellant performs tasks related to
4 veterans' education, she does not perform tasks associated with veterans benefits as a whole or
5 directly related to the other veteran services provided on campus. Appellant's position is not
6 encompassed by the Program Specialist class series concept; therefore, allocation to this series is
7 not appropriate.

8
9 The class series concept for the Program Coordinator classification provides that positions that
10 coordinate programs:

11 Perform work requiring knowledge and experience that is specific to a program.
12 Organize and perform work related to program operations independent of the daily
13 administrative office needs of the supervisor. Represent the program to clients,
14 participants and/or members of the public.

15 A program is a specialized area with specific complex components and discrete
16 tasks which distinguish it from the main body of an organization. A program is
17 specific to a particular subject. The specialized tasks involve interpretation of
18 policies, procedures and regulations, budget coordination/administration,
19 independent functioning and typically, public contact. Duties are not of a general
20 support nature transferable from one program to another. Performance of clerical
21 duties is in support of incumbent's performance of specialized tasks.

22 The intent of the Program Coordinator classification is further clarified by the definition of
23 "coordinate" found in the Glossary of terms. The Glossary provides that coordinators
24 "[i]ndependently organize, monitor, evaluate, and make adjustments for a program or activity
25 without supervisory responsibility."

26 Appellant works independently to organize, monitor and evaluate the services she provides to
27 veterans. She assists veterans to obtain educational benefits and makes adjustments by providing
28 information and helping students create corrective action plans. In addition, she performs work
29 that is unique and requires knowledge specific to the Veterans Education Program. She works
independent of the administrative needs of her supervisor and acts as the program liaison to on-

1 campus and off-campus entities. The Veterans Education Program has specific components and
2 discrete tasks that distinguish it from the main body of Workforce and Education Department.
3 These tasks require Appellant to interpret policies, procedures and regulations developed by other
4 entities and to apply knowledge and skills in the veterans' education segment of veterans'
5 benefits. Appellant's position fits within the class series concept and the intent of the Program
6 Coordinator classification.

7
8 The basic function of the Program Coordinator classification states: "[c]oordinate the operation of
9 a specialized or technical program."

10
11 The distinguishing characteristics for the Program Coordinator classification state:

12 Under general direction, perform work using knowledge and experience specific to
13 the program. Exercise independent judgment in interpreting and applying rules and
14 regulations. Independently advise students, staff, program participants and/or the
15 public regarding program content, policies, procedures and activities; select/
16 recommend alternative courses of action and either:

17 (1) project, monitor, maintain, initiate and/or approve expenditures on program
18 budgets

19 OR

20 (2) have extensive involvement with students, staff, the public and/or agencies in
21 carrying out program activities, and coordinate, schedule and monitor program
22 activities to determine consistency with program goals.

23 Appellant works with little supervision. She independently organizes, monitors, and evaluates the
24 services she provides to veterans. She exercises independent judgment in interpreting and
25 applying Title 38 of the Federal regulations, the GI Bill, and the policies and procedures of the
26 college. She is the veterans' education representative and a resource for students and others. In
27 addition, she identifies options and provides information to students on alternative courses of
28 action and has extensive involvement with on-campus and off-campus entities. Appellant's
29 position fits within the definition and distinguishing characteristics of the Program Coordinator
classification.

Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more than once classification. However, 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).

Appellant's duties and level of responsibilities best fit within the scope, intent and level of authority found in the Program Coordinator 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 Ana Roney is denied and the director's determination dated June 24, 2009, is affirmed

DATED this ____ day of _____, 2009.

WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

LAURA ANDERSON, Vice Chair

DJ MARK, Member