

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

JANE MCLEAN,

Appellant,

vs.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF SPOKANE,

Respondent.

CASE NO. R-ALLO-07-022

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 Resources Board, LAURA ANDERSON, Chair; MARSHA TADANO LONG, Vice Chair; and JOSEPH PINZONE, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated October 29, 2007. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Resources Board in Olympia, Washington, on February 13, 2008.

**Appearances.** Appellant Jane McLean was present and was represented by Desiree Desselle, Senior Field Representative for the Washington Federation of State Employees. Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS) was represented by Michael Lender, Human Resources Representative.

**Background.** Appellant's position was allocated to the class of Program Coordinator. On May 22, 2006, she submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) to Respondent's Spokane Falls Community College's Financial Aid Department. Appellant requested that her position be reallocated to the Program Manager A classification. By memo dated July 10, 2006, CCS informed Appellant that her position was properly allocated. By letter dated July 24, 2006, Appellant requested a director's review of her position.

On June 20, 2006, Teresa Parsons, the director's designee, conducted a review of Appellant's position. By letter dated October 29, 2007, Ms. Parsons determined that Appellant's position was properly allocated to the Program Coordinator classification.

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2 On November 21, 2007, Appellant filed exceptions to Ms. Parson's determination. In her letter of  
3 exceptions, Appellant requested that her position be reallocated to at least the Program Manager A  
4 classification. Alternatively, Appellant asked to be reallocated to a Program Specialist classification,  
5 a class which was not available when she submitted her request for review or to be compensated for  
6 the undisputed higher level work she performs. Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this  
7 proceeding.

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9 Appellant works in the Financial Aid program at Spokane Falls Community College. Appellant  
10 is responsible for all aspects of coordination and oversight of approximately 7 million dollars in  
11 student loans. Appellant is extremely knowledgeable and is considered the technical expert in  
12 student loans. She provides guidance and training to others about changes in regulations,  
13 processes and procedures governing student loans. Appellant exercises independent judgment  
14 and has delegated decision-making authority for student loans. In addition, other staff  
15 independently process student loans which are then reviewed and if needed, corrected by  
16 Appellant. Appellant does not supervise staff, but she does assign, instruct and check their work.  
17 Appellant is the point person for BETA testing for Federal Department of Education student loan  
18 software and she provides training to users of the program across the country. It is undisputed  
19 that some of Appellant duties are at a higher level than the duties typically performed by  
20 Program Coordinators.

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22 **Summary of Appellant's Arguments.** Appellant argues that Respondent recognizes that the scope  
23 and complexity of her work goes beyond the Program Coordinator classification yet she has not  
24 been compensated for performance of this higher level work. Appellant contends that her position  
25 fits within the definition of the Program Manager classification and asserts that the "A" level is the  
26 best fit for her position. Appellant asserts that her work has changed significantly since 2001  
27 particularly with the introduction of the Federal Department of Education student loan software, the  
28 activation of the student loan website, and the addition of academic programs. Appellant contends

1 that she exercises a high level of independence and decision making authority, that she supervises  
2 and coordinates all activities for the student loan program, that her supervisor provides her with little  
3 supervision or direction in regard to student loans, and that she functions as the point person for and  
4 spends a majority of time working with federal student loans. Appellant asserts that student loans  
5 constitute a division of Financial Aid and that because she plans, coordinates and implements all  
6 functions of student loans, her position should be reallocated to the Program Manager A  
7 classification or to a higher level of the new Program Specialist class series.

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9 **Summary of Respondent's Arguments.** Respondent argues that the Director's designee made the  
10 correct decision based on the classes available at the time of Appellant's request for review.  
11 Respondent agrees that Appellant is the content expert and point of contact for student loans within  
12 Financial Aid and that Appellant's work is more complex and complicated than the level of work  
13 typically performed by Program Coordinators. However, Respondent contends that knowledge and  
14 expertise does not qualify the duties and responsibilities of a position for allocation to a higher level  
15 classification. Respondent contends that Appellant's position does not rise to the Program Manager  
16 level because she does not supervise staff and does not manage the work of other staff. In addition,  
17 Respondent contends that Appellant's supervisor is ultimately responsible for development of  
18 program priorities, goals, objectives, timetables and work plans; development of program  
19 policies and procedures; program budget activities and allocation of program resources; and  
20 evaluating program effectiveness. While Respondent acknowledges that Appellant and her  
21 supervisor work closely together on issues affecting the student loans function, Respondent  
22 asserts that Appellant does not exercise the level of authority required for allocation to a  
23 Program Manager classification.

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

1 **Relevant Classifications.** Program Coordinator, class code 2056, Administrative Services Manager  
2 A, class code 2009.

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

11  
12 Appellant asks that she be provided compensation commensurate to the level of work she performs.  
13 However, salary inequity is not an allocation criterion and should not be considered when  
14 determining the appropriate allocation of a position. See Sorensen v Depts. Of Social and Health  
15 Services and Personnel, PAB Case No. A94-020 (1995).

16  
17 Here, as in Liddle-Stamper, we are comparing the duties and responsibilities of Appellant's position  
18 to the available classification specifications. We are considering the relevant classifications that were  
19 in effect on the date that Appellant requested her review from CCS. The Program Specialist  
20 classification was not available when Appellant requested a review of her position. Therefore,  
21 reallocation to this class would not be appropriate. [See Boekhoff v. Bellevue Community College,  
22 PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-002 (2007)].

23  
24 Most positions within the civil service system occasionally perform duties that appear in more  
25 than one classification. However, when determining the appropriate classification for a specific  
26 position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and  
27 the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall for the  
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29

majority of the position's duties and responsibilities. See Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

The definition of Program Manager states: "[s]upervise a division of a major administrative department, operating unit or program undertaking relieving the senior official of operating and administrative detail. Plan, coordinate and implement all functions required by the activity."

Appellant's position does not fit within the definition of a Program Manager because she is responsible for a portion of the Financial Aid program. She is not responsible for a division of a major administrative department or responsible for an operating unit or responsible for a program in its entirety. However, she does relieve her supervisor of administrative detail for a portion of the Financial Aid program and she coordinates and implements functions required by the student loan portion of the program.

The distinguishing characteristics for Program Manager A states, in relevant part: "[p]rogram manager [sic] at the 'A' level are typically first-line supervisors, and are characterized by their total responsibility for a program or management services to an administrative supervisor." Appellant is not a first-line supervisor and she does not have total responsibility for the Financial Aid program. She does function as a lead for other staff by assigning, instructing and checking their work. She also has significant responsibility for the student loan portion of the Financial Aid program.

The Department of Personnel Glossary of classification terms defines Program Management duties as involving the exercise of authority over:

- Development of program goals and objectives
- Development of timetables and work plans to achieve program goals and objectives
- Development of program policies and procedures
- Preparation of program budgets, adjustments of allotments and authorizing expenditures,
- Controlling allocation of program resources
- Setting and adjusting program priorities
- Evaluating program effectiveness

1 In addition, positions allocated to the Program Manager A classification typically have total program  
2 responsibility, are first-line supervisors, and work with a combination of two or more program  
3 services. [See Central Washington University v. Ford, PAB Case No. ALLO-02-0025 (2002) and  
4 Lubinski v. Columbia Basin College, PAB Case No. ALLO-01-0015 (2001)].

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6 Appellant's position does not exercise program management authority for the Financial Aid program  
7 and does not meet the components or contain the breadth of responsibility required for allocation to  
8 the Program Manager A classification.

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10 In Salsberry v. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-  
11 06-013 (2007), the Personnel Resources Board addressed the concept of best fit. The Board  
12 referenced Allegri v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. ALLO-96-0026 (1998), in  
13 which the Personnel Appeals Board noted that while the appellant's duties and responsibilities  
14 did not encompass the full breadth of the duties and responsibilities described by the  
15 classification to which his position was allocated, on a best fit basis, the classification best  
16 described the level, scope and diversity of the overall duties and responsibilities of his position.

17  
18 Here, the Program Manager A classification does not best describe the overall level, scope and  
19 diversity of Appellant duties or the breadth of her responsibilities. Rather, when considering the  
20 classifications available when she requested her review, her position best fits the Program  
21 Coordinator classification.

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23 Appellant is valuable employee who contributes a great deal of expertise and knowledge to the  
24 Financial Aid program, to the student loan function, to persons applying for student loans and to the  
25 Community Colleges of Spokane. However, in determining the proper allocation of a position, we  
26 must consider the duties and responsibilities assigned to the position, not the capabilities or expertise  
27 of the incumbent in the position. In this case, the duties and responsibilities of Appellant's position  
28 best fit the Program Coordinator classification.

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2 In a hearing on exceptions, the Appellant has the burden of proof. WAC 357-52-110. Appellant has  
3 failed to meet her burden of proof. Appellant's position is properly allocated to Program  
4 Coordinator.

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6 **ORDER**

7 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Jane McLean is  
8 denied and the director's determination dated October 29, 2007, is affirmed and adopted.

9 DATED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2008.

10 WASHINGTON PERSONNEL RESOURCES BOARD

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LAURA ANDERSON, Chair

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15 \_\_\_\_\_  
MARSHA TADANO LONG, Vice Chair

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17 \_\_\_\_\_  
18 JOSEPH PINZONE, Member