

STATE OF WISCONSIN

PERSONNEL COMMISSION

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FRANCESCA FONTE, *

Appellant, *

v. *

President, UNIVERSITY OF *

OF WISCONSIN, and *

Administrator, DIVISION OF *

PERSONNEL, *

Respondents. *

Case No. 82-131-PC *

* * * * *

DECISION
AND
ORDER

NATURE OF THE CASE

This is an appeal, pursuant to §230.44(1)(a), Wis. Stats., of the denial by respondent of appellant's request for reclassification of her position from Secretary 2 (PR2-08) to Program Assistant 4 (PR2-09).

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant to this matter, the appellant has been employed in the classified civil service by the University of Wisconsin Math Research Center as a Secretary 2.

2. On May 19, 1982, appellant received notice that respondent University of Wisconsin had denied the request for reclassification of appellant's position from Secretary 2 to Program Assistant 4 (PA 4). On June 2, 1982, appellant filed a timely appeal of such denial with the Personnel Commission.

3. The duties and responsibilities of appellant's position are as set forth in the position description signed by appellant on January 29, 1982, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference as if fully set forth as a part of this finding.

4. The class description section of the position standard for a Secretary 2 states that:

This is office assistance work of moderate difficulty in providing advanced personal secretarial services to a professional, educator, or administrator. Positions at this level perform all of the functions of the Secretary 1 and in addition perform the more complex personal secretarial tasks requiring considerable initiative, judgment, discretion, responsibility and specialized knowledge in applying established policies and procedures. Positions at this level are differentiated from those at the 1 level on the basis of the degree of authority exercised on behalf of the supervisor and the consequence of error and impact of those decisions. All such decisions require an extensive knowledge of organizational structure, work assignments, flow of work and procedural regulations among the organization's operating units. Work is performed under direction.

The work examples section of the position standard for a Secretary 2 provides as follows:

Performs complex secretarial responsibilities demanding extensive knowledge of organizational structure, work assignments, flow of work, and procedural regulations among operating units.

- Screens visitors, mail and telephone calls.
- Takes dictation and transcribes from tapes, rough drafts, forms, etc.
- Types a variety of copy, including drafts and legislation, technical or medical materials, personnel documents, minutes, graphs, charts, correspondence and reports.
- Types reports and records relating to budget, personnel, and administrative matters.
- Maintains records of departmental income and expenses.
- Sets up, maintains and controls a variety of files.
- Attends staff meetings and takes minutes.
- Maintains timekeeping records for staff.
- Compiles statistics and submits monthly reports.
- Directs part-time subordinates and/or students as assigned.
- Prepares input for classified and student help payrolls from employe timesheets.

Maintains inventory of supplies; order supplies; verifies orders and invoices against purchase requests.

Plans, assigns and guides the activities of lower level clerical personnel.

Plans itineraries and makes transportation and lodging reservations.

Maintains records and compiles reports as required.

Compiles fiscal and statistical reports as directed.

May operate a teletype machine.

Composes letters, requiring independent judgment and research.

Interprets policies and procedures.

Writes news releases.

Prepares progress reports for research projects.

Reconciles computer printouts.

Mimeographs and xeroxes general as well as special materials.

5. The class description section of the position standard for a Program Assistant 4 states that:

This is paraprofessional staff support work of considerable difficulty as an assistant to the head of a major program function or organization activity. Positions allocated to this class are coordinative and administrative in nature. Positions typically exercise a significant degree of independence and latitude for decision making and may also function as leadworkers. Positions at this level are differentiated from lower-level Program Assistants on the basis of the size and scope of the program involved, the independence of action, degree of involvement and impact of decisions and judgment required by the position. Work is performed under direction.

The work examples section of the position standard for a Program Assistant 4 provides as follows:

Plans, assigns and guides the activities of a unit engaged in current projects or programs.

Researches and produces, as recommended by federal regulations and through the direction of an immediate supervisor, necessary data and information to prepare grant applications based on federal, state and local funding regulations.

Interprets rules, regulations, policies and procedures for faculty, other employers and the public.

Prepares various informational, factual and statistical reports.

Assists in the development and revision of policies, laws, rules, and procedures affecting the entire program or operation.

Coordinates units within the department, between departments, or with the general public, in an informative capacity for a variety of complex matters.

Coordinates units within the department, between departments, or with the general public, in an informative capacity for a variety of complex matters.

Conducts special projects; analyzes, assembles or obtains information.

Prepares equipment and material specifications, receives bids and authorizes the purchase of an operating department's equipment, material and supplies.

Analyzes, interprets and prepares various reports.

Administers and scores admission and placement tests; administers nationally scheduled examinations; confers with applicants regarding test interpretations.

6. The clear majority of appellant's duties are secretarial in nature. Only a very small percentage of appellant's duties, those relating to making housing and other arrangements for visitors and staff, are paraprofessional in nature.

7. Appellant's position is more accurately described by class specifications for a Secretary 2 than class specifications for a PA 4.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. This matter is appropriately before the Commission pursuant to §230.44(1)(b), Wis. Stats.

2. The appellant has the burden of proving that respondent's decision denying the reclassification of appellant's position from Secretary 2 to Program Assistant 4 was incorrect.

3. The appellant has failed to meet that burden of proof.

4. Respondent's decision denying appellant's reclassification was correct.

OPINION

The proper classification of a position involves a weighing of the class specifications and the actual work performed to determine which classification best fits the position. In appeals of reclassification denials, it is frequently the case that the duties and responsibilities of

the subject position overlap in some respects both of the class specifications in question. The position is not entitled to reclassification because some aspects of the work involved fall within the higher class, Kailin v. Weaver and Wettengel, 73-124-PC (11/28/75), particularly if those aspects constitute less than a majority of the total duties and responsibilities of the position.

The record reveals that appellant is regarded by her supervisor and co-workers as a capable and valued employe. However, the issue to be decided in this reclassification appeal is not whether the appellant does a good job but whether the job she does is best described by the class specifications for a PA 4 or a Secretary 2.

Positions classified at the PA 4 level are, by definition, paraprofessional positions. The PA 4 work examples section of the position standard, although not intended to provide an exhaustive list of specific PA 4 job duties and responsibilities, does provide guidance as to the general nature, level, and complexity of such duties and responsibilities. These work examples emphasize the independent leadwork or supervisory, research, writing, analysis, report production, information coordination, and administrative duties of PA 4 positions. The only comparable duties of appellant's position are those described by section c.10 of appellant's position description: "In charge of temporary housing of visitors and permanent housing for incoming staff members." C.10 is one of ten duties which together account for only 10% of appellant's total duties, i.e., C.10 accounts for only a very small percentage of appellant's total duties. To justify classification at the PA 4 level, appellant's paraprofessional duties would have to constitute a majority of the total duties of appellant's position. The correspondence preparation, agenda preparation,

and information gathering duties of appellant's position, as described in her position description, are the only other duties of her position which could be regarded as paraprofessional if performed in an independent manner. However, the non-standard content of correspondence or meeting agendas prepared by appellant is supplied by her supervisor and any non-routine information gathering done by appellant is carried out in accordance with her supervisor's specific instructions. These duties are obviously not carried out with the degree of independence required by the PA 4 position standard.

The remainder of appellant's duties are clearly secretarial in nature and closely parallel the work examples listed in the Secretary 2 position standard. The overwhelming majority of appellant's duties are, therefore, best described by the Secretary 2 class specifications and her position is more appropriately classified at the Secretary 2, not the PA 4, level.


ORDER

Respondent's denial of appellant's request for reclassification is affirmed and this appeal is dismissed.

Dated: April 15, 1983 STATE PERSONNEL COMMISSION


DONALD R. MURPHY, Chairperson

LRM:jmf


LAURIE R. McCALLUM, Commissioner


JAMES W. PHILLIPS, Commissioner

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