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SANDRA SHAFFER,

Appellant,

v.

President, UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN SYSTEM
(Madison), and Secretary,
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
RELATIONS,

Respondents.

Case No. 88-0106-PC

* * * * *

DECISION
AND
ORDER

Nature of the Case

This is an appeal of respondent's denial of appellant's request for the reclassification of her position from Program Assistant 1 (PA 1) to Program Assistant 2 (PA 2). A hearing was held on November 21, 1988, before Laurie R. McCallum, Commissioner.

Findings of Fact

1. At all times relevant to this matter, appellant has been employed by respondent University of Wisconsin-Extension as a PA 1 in its Contract Printing Department.

2. In March of 1988, appellant requested the reclassification of her position to the PA 2 level. Appellant's request included a copy of her current position description.

3. In preparation for hearing, appellant prepared a second position description which stated as follows:

A. Office Management

1. Communicates with telephone and walk-in customers and vendors answering inquiries pertaining to printing orders: i.e., delivery dates, proof dates, etc.
2. Receives and screens or distributes communications to proper department personnel.
3. Monitors Budget Control Sheets and verifies for accuracy all entries and insures back-up documentation is in order; determines and issues additional funds as needed.
4. Attends training workshops to improve skills and insure up-to-date methods are used in the department.
5. Prepares monthly and annual financial reports for customers from computer balance sheets.
6. Monitors and maintains inventory of office supplies and equipment and initiates orders as needed.
7. Initiates all blanket and single requisitions for the department.
8. Resolution of problems by researching relevant information and communicating such to vendor or department by written or verbal communications. Follows through to satisfactory finalization of transaction.
9. Develops and revises office procedures. Recommends printing office internal policy and procedural changes to enhance operating effectiveness.
10. Maintains up-to-date manual of state printing policies, procedures and bulletins for use in ordering printing.

B. Printing Coordination

1. Collects, organizes, develops and processes Printing Orders and related records.
 - a. Maintains printing orders, blanket requisitions and production schedule records for \$1,250,000 by utilizing the Word Processing/Wang system.
 - b. Must consistently monitor orders in progress to be sure orders are progressing, contacts vendors when necessary, to clarify delays in delivery of merchandise, etc.
 - c. Receives incoming invoices, verifies to assure billing is correct, and coordinates all documents to submit for payment processing. Maintains files for future State audits.

- d. Reviews typed printing orders for proper format, completeness and accuracy, signs, and distributes to proper recipients.
 2. Monitors movement of proofs. Collects all files on expected due date of proof, communicates with printers to confirm proof delivery, communicates with departments when their proof is received. Is responsible for return of proof and related materials to printer.
 3. Performs Printing Bid Activities.
 - a. Develops and initiates legal notices for Official Sealed Bids.
 - b. Responsible for proper bid information and forms to be sent to vendors.
 - c. Communicates with vendors for exact re-run prices of speciality items.
 - d. Is responsible for and controls the maintenance of bid files ensuring that maximum security is provided until date and time of opening, receives quotation submittals, and insures all bids are opened at the mandated date and time and that all State of Wisconsin Statutes and Regulations are followed on the three types of bids processed--Regular, Sealed, and Official Sealed Bids.
 4. Must be able to acknowledge, clarify and respond to customers billing and requisition questions and services offered. Must have knowledge to explain blanket requisition billing procedures and charges to customers.
 5. Coordinates and prepares printing orders and bid request forms.
 6. Justifies charges and verifies correct requisition number on monthly State of Wisconsin DOA invoices for paper that relates to the printing orders processed by the office.
 7. Develops and maintains all record keeping of documents for printing orders, blanket requisitions and production schedules.
 8. Initiates basic printing orders to contract vendors for business cards and envelopes based on requests from customer.
5. Appellant's position does not perform the duties designated as A8, A9, A10, and B1c on this position description. Otherwise, the duties and responsibilities of appellant's position are accurately described by this second position description.
6. The following changes had occurred in the duties and responsibilities of appellant's position since it had first been classified at the PA 1 level:
- a. Initiating basic printing orders for business cards and envelopes.
 - b. Responding to customers' billing and blanket requisition questions.

- c. Initiating legal notices for bids.
 - d. Handling return of proofs.
7. In performing the duties and responsibilities of her position, appellant primarily follows well-established policies and procedures developed by others.
8. The position standard for the Program Assistant series provides, in pertinent part:

Program Assistant 1

This is work of moderate difficulty providing program support assistance to supervisory, professional or administrative staff. Positions allocated to this level serve as the principal support staff within a specific defined program or a significant segment of a program. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Clerical Assistant 2 level by their identified accountability for the implementation and consequences of program activities over which they have decision-making control. Therefore, although the actual tasks performed at this level may in many respects be similar to those performed at the Clerical Assistant 2 level, the greater variety, scope and complexity of the problem-solving, the greater independence of action, and the greater degree of personal or procedural control over the program activities differentiates the Program Assistant functions. The degree of programmatic accountability and involvement is measured on the basis of the size and scope of the area impacted by the decision and the consequence of error in making such decisions, which increases with each successive level in the Program Assistant series. Work is performed under general supervision.

Program Assistant 2

This is work of moderate difficulty providing program support assistance to supervisory, professional or administrative staff. Positions are allocated to this class on the basis of the degree of programmatic involvement, delegated authority to act on behalf of the program head, level and degree of independence exercised, and scope and impact of decisions involved. Positions allocated to this level are distinguished from the Program Assistant I level based on the following criteria: (1) the defined program area for which this level is accountable is greater in scope and complexity; (2) the impact of decisions made at this level is greater in terms of the scope of the policies and procedures that are affected; (3) the nature of the program area presents differing situations requiring a search for solutions from a variety of alternatives; and (4) the procedures and precedents which govern the program area are somewhat diversified

rather than clearly established. Work is performed under general supervision.

9. The following positions were offered for comparison purposes in the hearing record:

a. Program Assistant 2--Susan Marie Kohn--UW-Milwaukee Purchasing Department: The primary emphasis of this position is the preparation of orders and contracts in accordance with state, system and local procurement policy; the solicitation of telephone bids from various vendors; the abstracting of the information received through the bidding process; and the direct resolution of problems which arise during the processing of purchase orders such as those relating to non-delivery of ordered merchandise, price changes or substitutions, lost or damaged shipments, cancellations and change orders.

The clerical support for the unit is provided by a Program Assistant 1 position.

b. Program Assistant 2--Katherine Banna--UW-Milwaukee Printing Services: This position maintains and reconciles financial records, process invoices, inventories and orders supplies and equipment, and provides financial data for printing manager in preparation of department budget (45%); performs general office functions for unit (30%); serves as leadworker for the clerical staff, develops and revises office procedures, trains clerical staff (20%).

c. Programs Assistant 2--Mary Brunner--Department of Transportation Purchasing, Printing, Materials Management Management Section: This position independently manages the purchase order writing system and the solicitations phase of the bidding process, including programming the computer which prepares purchase orders, preparing the agency's Minority Business Report for the Department of Administration, serving as liaison with the State Records Center, and recommending revisions to the forms used by the unit. During the 1986 calendar year, the unit issued purchase orders exceeding \$57 million.

d. Program Assistant 2--Tammi Gandolph--UW-Madison Purchasing Services: This position's duties and responsibilities are parallel to those of the Kohn position described above.

e. Program Assistant 1--Lois Bradley--UW-River Falls Purchasing Department: This position assists the Purchasing Director in the solicitation and processing of sealed bids, the preparation and distribution of purchase orders resulting from bidding process, answering inquiries related to the bidding process, maintenance of Purchasing Department fiscal records, auditing of invoices,

development and maintenance of Department files, and performance of other office support functions.

f. Program Assistant 1--Nora Nielson--This position is responsible for the production and distribution of bid documents, processing of bids, receiving and routing all incoming correspondence and inquiries, compiling data for reports such as the Minority Vendor report, providing clerical support to the unit, developing policies and procedures for the unit, designing new forms, developing and maintaining office files, serving as lead worker for student and LTE employees, maintenance of campus inventory records, and assisting purchasing agents.

10. Appellant filed a request for the reclassification of her position from PA 1 to PA2 in March on 1988. This request was denied by respondent in a letter dated August 3, 1988. Appellant filed a timely appeal of such denial with the Commission.

11. The duties and responsibilities of appellant's position are better described by the position standard for the PA 1 classification than that for the PA 2 classification. The duties and responsibilities of appellant's position are more closely comparable to those of the PA 1 positions offered for comparison purposes than to those of the PA 2 positions offered for comparison purposes.

Conclusions of Law

1. This matter is properly before the Commission pursuant to s. 230.44(1)(b), Stats.
2. The appellant has the burden to show that respondent's decision denying her request for the reclassification of her position from PA 1 to PA 2 was incorrect.
3. Appellant has failed to sustain this burden.

4. Respondent's decision denying the subject request was correct and appellant's position is appropriately classified at the PA 1 level.

Decision

One of the primary distinctions between positions classified at the PA 1 level and those classified at the PA 2 level is the extent to which the positions are involved in the independent exercise of discretion, i.e., the extent to which the positions are involved in independent decision-making, the extent to which this decision-making is governed by clearly established policies and procedures and the extent to which it involves choosing from a variety of alternatives.

In the present case, appellant independently carries out a variety of duties but her performance of these duties is governed by clearly established policies and procedures developed by others. Appellant's position does not involve the independent exercise of discretion required for classification at the PA 2 level.

For example, appellant cites two areas of responsibility of her position which she feels are at the PA 2 level. First, appellant cites her responsibility in the area of filling orders and processing requisitions. However, the record indicates that appellant's review of orders received by the Contract Printing Department involves such details as ascertaining that the form has been completed and signed. The review of the substance of the order is done by appellant's supervisor. Appellant's other duties in relation to such order include date stamping the order when it is received into the office, typing up the order after her supervisor has reviewed it, sending the order to the

printer, sending copies of the order to the proper parties, assigning a requisition number to the order, entering data relating to the order into the computer, noting the return date for the proof on the calendar, and closing the order out on the computer once the order is filled. Some of these duties are clearly routine clerical duties, e.g., date stamping, typing, assigning a requisition number, and the others of the type generally governed by and routinized by the establishment of office procedures. The record reveals that such procedures have been developed for the Contract Printing Department. Appellant's second example relates to her independent responsibility for placing legal notices. However, the record also reveals that this is another area governed by clearly established policies and procedures, i.e., the format of the notices and the procedures through which they are to be placed have been developed by someone other than appellant and appellant follows these formats and procedures in independently placing these notices

Since the language of the position standard for the Program Assistant series is quite general, it is often useful to review other positions classified in the series when determining the proper classification of a position within the series. In the instant case, the PA 2 positions offered for comparison purposes are much stronger positions than appellant's. For example, the Kohn position and the Gandolph position actually gather quotes from vendors; abstract information received through the bidding process for the purchasing agents; and independently solve problems which arise during the processing of purchase orders such as those relating to non-delivery of ordered merchandise, price changes or substitutions, lost or damaged shipments, cancellations and change orders. Appellant's position has no equivalent

responsibilities. In addition, these positions do not serve as the principal clerical support for their units as appellant's position does--there is a PA 1 position in the unit which has this responsibility. The Banna position has lead work responsibility over the unit's clerical staff. Appellant's position has no equivalent responsibility. The Brunner position's duties and responsibilities not only relate to a much larger program than appellant's but also include computer programming and preparation of the Minority Business Report. Appellant's position has no equivalent responsibility.

The PA 1 positions offered for comparison purposes are very comparable to appellant's position. The duties and responsibilities of such positions parallel appellant's. In at least one instance, the position is even stronger than appellant's i.e., the Nielson position also has lead work responsibilities.

The result in this case is clear. The appellant's position is appropriately classified at the PA 1 level.

Order

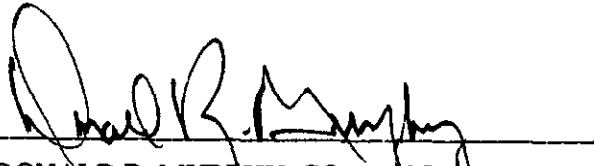
The action of respondent is affirmed and this appeal is dismissed.

Dated: January 12, 1989

STATE PERSONNEL COMMISSION



LAURIE R. McCALLUM, CHAIRPERSON



DONALD R. MURPHY, COMMISSIONER



GERALD F. HODDINNOTT, COMMISSIONER

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