

August 16, 2007

RE: Suzanne (Sewell) Jahraus v. North Seattle Community College (NSCC)  
Allocation Review Number: ALLO-06-014

Dear Ms. Jahraus:

The Director's review of NSCC's allocation determination of your position has been completed. The review was based on the written documentation submitted by you and NSCC and on information provided during the July 31, 2007, telephone conference held with you; Gary Hill and Evelyn Gershen, Senior Field Representatives for the Washington Federation of State Employees; David Bittenbender, Human Resources Administrator for NSCC; and Alice Melling, Associate Dean for Advising and Student Success Services.

**Background**

On December 21, 2005, you submitted a Position Questionnaire (PQ) to NSCC's Human Resources Department asking that your position be reallocated to Classified Manager B. By memorandum dated August 1, 2006, NSCC determined that your position was properly allocated to the Program Coordinator classification.

On August 28, 2006, you filed a Request for Director's Review form. You asked that your position be reallocated to the Program Manager B classification.

**Summary of Ms. Jahraus' Perspective**

You feel that you have performed as the program manager for student Disability Services since January 2001. You argue that you have the background, training and qualifications necessary for the manager's position. You have a thorough knowledge of the laws and regulations governing disability services for students and using this knowledge, you provide advice to staff and students; coordinate information with community organizations and others as necessary; monitor the disability services budget; evaluate students' accommodation needs, including determining their equipment needs; and supervise staff within the office. Following the departure of the former program manager in December 2000, a draft transition plan was developed which indicated that you would be upgraded to manager on an interim basis. While you were not upgraded, you argue that you did assume and perform all of the manager duties. You contend that you

continue to perform the manager's duties and ask that your position be reallocated to the Program Manager B classification.

### **Summary of NSCC's reasoning**

NSCC acknowledges that your level of expertise in disability issues is a valuable asset for the college and that some of your duties could fit within the scope of the Program Manager A classification. However, NSCC asserts that the overall scope of your duties and your level of responsibility best fit within the Program Coordinator description. NSCC argues that you do not report to a senior official of a major administrative department, operating unit or program and that you do not exercise the independent authority or total responsibility for the program as envisioned by positions allocated to the Program Manager A and B classifications. NSCC contends that your position is consistent with the duties and level of responsibility performed by other Program Coordinators at NSCC and that your position is properly allocated.

### **Director's Determination**

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file and considered the clarifying information both parties provided during the conference call. I considered the duties you performed during the six months prior to your request for review and compared them to the classification specifications in place at that time. I specifically reviewed the Program Coordinator, Program Manager A, and Program Manager B classifications. I find that the Program Coordinator classification best described the duties and responsibilities of your position.

### **Rationale for Determination**

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. 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. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

You have an extensive background and knowledge of disability issues which allows you to provide support to NSCC students with disabilities and to the staff and faculty who serve the students. You report to Alice Melling, Associate Dean for Advising and Student Success Services. Ms. Melling reports to Marci Myer, Dean of Students, and Ms. Myer reports to Vice President Roy Flores. Disability Services is one of a number of areas within Ms. Melling's scope of responsibility. You work independently and have substantive contact with students, faculty and staff; however, you do not have delegated authority to act on your supervisor's behalf when she is absent.

In summary, and as described in the PQ for your position and clarified during the conference call, you:

- 25% *Assess students and advise them regarding Disability Services policies and procedures, and make referrals as required. Assist students to become self advocating as well as helping them with issues and problems which may have an impact on their studies.*

*5% Screen students for learning disabilities; refer students to counseling and other appropriate resources both on and off campus.*

During the conference call, you clarified that you determine appropriate accommodations using a variety of resources such as recommendations from the student's health care provider, review of the accommodations provided to the student in the past, and information obtained from the student during your meeting with the student. After consultation with the student, you decide which accommodation is reasonable and meets the student's needs.

*5% Provide case management services to a variety of students.*

During the conference call, you clarified that the case management services you provide includes making sure the students get the proper referrals both on-campus and off-campus and that any problems/issues the student encounters during a class are addressed with the instructor. You also stated that while you may refer a student to other resources, it is the student's responsibility to follow through on the referral.

*10% Provide information on disability issues to Administration, Faculty and Staff. Interpret, advise, and implement program policies and procedures by keeping current on disability law and outcomes of complaints filed with the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Education, (OCR) and also by contacting OCR when needed.*

During the conference call, you clarified that you provide disability services for students only. Services for staff are provided by human resource staff. You provide information to instructors and staff for student accommodations. In the past, you have provided presentations on subjects such as communications and disabilities. You also clarified that you develop and implement verbal work policies and procedures for office staff such as developing and implementing a process for recording and tracking statistics regarding the cost of services provided and number of students served. You do not develop formal policies with campus-wide impact.

*20% Consult with the education community and professional providers to ensure students' needs are met in a holistic manner.*

During the conference call, you clarified that you work with various departments on the campus to assure students' needs are met. You provided a couple examples of the holistic approach you take. For example, if a student has memory issues, you write a list of what the student needs to do so that the student can follow through with his/her activities or resolution of his/her problem. Or, if a student is at risk of losing financial aid, you meet with the student to determine why, advise the student to obtain the proper documentation and write an appeal to the financial aid office, and then you and the student will meet with the financial aid office and develop a resolution plan that will allow the student to continue to receive financial aid. You indicated that you take a holistic approach by involving other departments and resources when needed.

*15% Direct, supervise, training and evaluate Disability Services staff to ensure implementation and coordination of the programs, activities/events and individualized student services.*

During the conference call, you clarified that you are responsible for the work of 2 part-time office assistants and various student and work study employees. The office assistants work a total of 34 hours per week. At the time of your request for review, the students and work study employees worked variable hours as needed to provide tutoring and proctoring. You do not

conduct formal performance evaluations or hire staff. But you do verbally tell staff what to do and then oversee their work to assure they performed the task correctly. If an employee is having difficulties, you will meet with the employee to correct the problem, for example, you might advise him/her on the correct way to perform the work or on the appropriate way to interact with a disabled student. Your supervisor is responsible for hiring and firing employees, though you may recommend that a student employee be released if that employee is not working out.

*15% Manage/oversee statistics gathering, reporting and budgetary responsibilities related to the unit; establish a system for identifying and reporting student progress.*

During the conference call, you clarified that you assure that expenditures are within the Disability Services budget and that the budget is balanced, but you do not develop the budget. At the time of your request for review, your supervisor was responsible for budget development and she had signature authority for expenditures.

*5% Keep abreast of current trends, and access equipment and space utilization needs.*

The Program Manager A and B classifications share a common definition. The definition states: “[s]upervises a division of a major administrative department, operating unit or program undertaking relieving the senior official of operating and administrative detail. Plans, coordinates and implements all functions required by the activity.”

Your position does not fit within this definition. You do not supervise the Disability Services program relieving Ms. Melling of operating and administrative detail. Rather, at the time of your request for a position review, you provided disability services to students and oversaw the day-to-day operations of the office. Ms. Melling had overall responsibility for the operation of program including responsibility for developing the budget and hiring and firing staff. She was responsible for administrative details such as approving budget expenditures, approving purchasing requests, and signing paperwork work for staff.

In addition, positions allocated to the Program Manager B level are typically second-level supervisors. Because you do not supervise other supervisors, your position does not rise to the “B” level.

The Glossary of classification terms found in the Department of Personnel Classification and Pay Administrative Guide provides further guidance on the level and scope of work performed by Program Managers. The glossary states that the duties of a Program Manager involve exercising 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

Your position does not exercise the scope or breadth of authority anticipated at the Program Manager level.

The definition for Program Coordinator states: “[c]oordinate the operation of a specialized or technical program.” Disability Services is a specialized program and you are responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations of the program.

The distinguishing characteristics for Program Coordinator state:

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

- Project, monitor, maintain, initiate and/or approve expenditures on program budgets

OR

- Have extensive involvement with students, staff, the public and/or agencies in carrying out program activities, and coordinate, schedule and monitor program activities to determine consistency with program goals.

You work under general direction, exercise independent judgment and apply your expertise and knowledge to provide disability services to students and to the faculty and staff who serve the students.

Your position fits within the definition and distinguishing characteristics of the Program Coordinator classification. In addition, while not allocating criteria, the typical work for this classification encompass the duties and responsibilities assigned to your position. Your position is properly allocated.

I understand this has been a lengthy process, and my analysis reflects the time period prior to December 21, 2005. If you believe your duties have changed or expanded since that time, you may request a review of your current duties and responsibilities in accordance with NSCC's reallocation procedure.

### **Appeal Rights**

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board by filing written exceptions to the Directors' determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC.

WAC 357-52-015 states that an appeal must be received in writing at the office of the Board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Directors' determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Sincerely,

Holly Platz, SPHR  
Director's Review Investigator

cc: David Bittenbender, NSCC  
Gary Hill, WFSE  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Exhibit List for Jahraus v NSCC

Documents received as part of the Director's review request:

1. Request for Directors' Review form signed by Suzanne (Sewell) Jahraus on August 17, 2006, received August 28, 2006 requesting reallocation to a Program Manager B (2 pages)
2. Letter dated August 17, 2006 addressed to whom it may concern signed by Ms. Jahraus (2 pages)
3. Memorandum dated August 1, 2006 from David Bittenbender to Ms. Jahraus, subject: Determination of Position Review (3 pages)
4. E-mail dated July 26, 2006 from Mr. Bittenbender to Suzanne Sewell (1 page)
5. Letter dated June 16, 2006 from Roy Flores to Mr. Bittenbender Subject: Position Questionnaire- Suzanne Jahraus Sewell (3 pages)
6. E-mail dated January 2, 2001 from Roy Flores to SDS Staff Subject: Transition Plan for the Educational Access Center (1 page)
7. Position announcement for Manager/Educational Access Center, Job #99-145-RS (1 page)
8. Employee Development and Performance Plan for Suzanne Sewell signed by Ms. Sewell on December 21, 2003 (2 pages)
9. Registered Counselor certification for Suzanne Sewell issued on October 25, 2005 (1 page)
10. Letter dated August 16, 2005 from Ira Feiger to whom it may concern (1 page)
11. Position Questionnaire for Suzanne (Sewell) Jahraus date stamped by NSCC Human Resources Dept. on December 21, 2005 (14 pages)
12. Disability Services Annual Report 2005 – 2006 (7 pages)

Duplicates of the above Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were forwarded to DOP by NSCC under cover a letter dated September 27, 2006. Additional exhibits from Ms. Jahraus included with NSCC's letter:

13. Request for Director's Review form signed by Suzanne Jahraus on July 13, 2006 (2 pages)
14. Letter dated July 13, 2006 addressed to whom it may concern signed by Ms. Sewell (2 pages)
15. Request for Director's Review form signed by Suzanne Jahraus on July 13, 2006 requesting reallocation to a Program Manager A with addition of handwritten note "or B" (2 pages)

Additional documents considered:

16. Program Coordinator class specification, class code 2256 (2 pages)
17. Program Manager A/B class specification (class code 2015/2016) (3 pages)