October 4, 2007

RE: Jeffrey Maupin v. Washington State University
Allocation Review Request ALLO-06-021

Dear Mr. Maupin:

On August 14, 2007, I conducted a Director's review meeting by telephone conference call regarding the allocation of your position and Ted Scharnhorst's position. Present during the telephone conference were you and Mr. Scharnhorst, as well as Human Resource Consultants Zami Wilson and Suzette Yaezenko, representing Washington State University (WSU).

Background

On July 19, 2006, you submitted a Position Questionnaire (PQ) to WSU's Human Resource Services, requesting that your Maintenance Mechanic 2 (MM 2) position, #70965, be reallocated to the Maintenance Mechanic 3 (MM 3) classification. In a memorandum dated September 14, 2006, Steve DeSoer, Executive Director of Human Resource Services, notified you that your position was appropriately allocated to the MM 2 classification. WSU asserts your job duties do not rise to the senior or specialist level of work characteristic of the MM 3 class. Additionally, WSU notes your position has been assigned to a lead worker.

On October 4, 2006, the Department of Personnel received your request for a Director's review of WSU's allocation determination.

The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

Summary of Mr. Maupin's Perspective

You assert you perform specialized work because you chemically treat, test, and maintain water systems and deionized (DI) water stations on campus. In addition, you contend your work involves more than one craft or trade because you perform electrical, plumbing, and fabrication duties in the course of maintaining and repairing hot water heating systems, cooling towers, and DI water stations. You state that you and Mr. Scharnhorst are the only two maintenance mechanics handling these specialized water systems on campus and point out that the DI Water Treatment Plant is unique to WSU. As such, you believe your duties and responsibilities involve specific work in a specialized area.

You state your position requires an in-depth understanding of the chemicals used to treat the water systems. You state the chemical testing involves weekly testing of the cooling towers and hot water heating systems. Some examples include collecting water samples, testing pH levels in DI plant discharge water and using specialized water testing equipment to ensure efficient operation of the systems and compliance with state guidelines. You give examples equipment used in the DI water system regeneration process, including electronic solenoid valves, chemical feed pumps, air pumps, holding tanks, specialized chemical injectors, hot water lines, and electronic blow down meters and pH meters. You assert you calibrate the DI system and repair, rebuild, fabricate, install, inspect and monitor the systems' micron filters, U-V lights, electronic solenoid valves, water meters, probes, electronic pumps, and computerized water softeners.

In the course of your duties, you assert that you perform electrical work on solenoids, meters, gauges, and other equipment unique to water treatment. You give other examples of electrical work, including the "mother board," timers, and hooking up water heaters. The examples of plumbing work include putting in holding tanks and domestic water lines, plumbing water lines from the tank to building. In summary you assert you perform journey-level water treatment work in a specialized field in addition to performing electrical, plumbing, and fabrication duties. You and Mr. Scharnhorst contend you work independently, solve problems and use your discretion about the type of maintenance or repair needed. You further assert you schedule your work, decide what action to take based on water testing results and analysis, and order necessary tools, fittings, and chemicals. You also keep testing records. You assert other MM 2 positions assigned to buildings rely on your help regarding DI system maintenance and repair. As a result, you believe your position should be reallocated to the MM 3 classification.

Summary of WSU's Reasoning

WSU acknowledges that the chemical testing you conduct on the water systems is specialized. However, WSU contends the level of work performed in the other disciplines, such as electrical, plumbing, and fabrication, does not rise to the level of work performed at the MM 3 level. WSU further contends that the design and installation of electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems are referred to higher level or

licensed personnel. Similarly, WSU asserts complex problems are resolved at a higher level and notes your position has been assigned a lead worker and that lead positions exist in other disciplines such as electrical and plumbing. Although you perform your duties independently and apply a general knowledge of several related skill fields, WSU believes this level of skilled work is encompassed in the MM 2 classification. In addition, WSU asserts your position has not been assigned the specialized, high-level maintenance work characteristic of the MM 3 classification. Therefore, WSU contends your position is properly allocated as an MM 2.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for at least the six-month period prior to October 4, 2006.

As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits discussed during the Director's review meeting, and the verbal comments provided by all parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Maintenance Mechanic 2 classification.

Rationale for Determination

On your Position Questionnaire (PQ), your position's purpose states that you chemically treat and maintain water systems on campus. In addition to chemically treating the systems, you test, maintain, and repair water cooling towers, deionized (DI) water stations, chemical feed systems, chemical pumps, computerized water softeners, the chilled water storage facility and DI plant. (Exhibit 3).

You note that you work with hazardous chemicals on a daily basis and refer to a material safety data sheet (MSDS). Your duties and responsibilities are summarized as follows:

30% Regenerate deionized water resin tanks and deliver tanks to users. Troubleshoot, repair, replace and service all equipment associated with deionized water and regeneration, including solenoids, meters, valves, piping, manifolds and gauges. Install new deionized water facilities and expand existing facilities as needed.

30% Sample, test, calibrate, adjust, diagnose and troubleshoot all water treatment equipment and systems. The equipment and systems serviced include the following: cooling towers, low-pressure boilers, chilled water systems, hot water heat systems, steam condensate systems and softeners.

15% Monitor, service, and calibrate automatic chemical feed pumps, electronic chemical timers, and conductivity controllers as needed.

15% Perform related maintenance and repair duties and assist the refrigeration mechanic, plumbers, electricians, and water technicians.

10% Maintain production, testing, and analysis records.

Both the Maintenance Mechanic classes are included in the Trades Helpers/General Maintenance Occupational Category, which describes positions in the series, in part, as performing general maintenance and repair, utilizing working knowledge of several related skill fields, including electrical, plumbing, and machinist work. As such, incumbents inspect, repair, install, and maintain equipment and may lead or supervise in general maintenance activities. Although you also perform water quality testing and treatment duties, there was not a higher education class specification that encompassed those duties during the timeframe relevant to your request.

The Washington State Classification and Pay Administrative Guide states that a position's allocation is based on a review and analysis of the duties and responsibilities of the position and is allocated **on a best-fit basis** as determined by the majority of work performed. Because a significant portion of your work also involves the maintenance and repair of the water systems, your position best fits within the Trades Helpers/General Maintenance Occupational Category.

Comparison of Duties to Maintenance Mechanic 2

The distinguishing characteristics at the MM 2 level describe the class as the journey, working or occupational level of the series. Further, positions perform a variety of skilled work in the operation, maintenance, and repair of facilities, systems, and equipment. Incumbents working in MM2 positions "work independently and utilize a general knowledge of several related skill fields such as plumbing, electrical, welding, carpentry, and machinist work."

Although the examples of work do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. The following items are included in the examples of work listed at the MM 2 level and are similar to the type of maintenance and repairs you perform:

- Performs preventative maintenance and repairs on all types of mechanical equipment such as electrical drive motors to ensure proper operation;

- Performs maintenance, operation and repair of electrical, mechanical and structural systems of buildings and utility distribution;

- Monitor environmental control equipment to ensure the building systems and equipment are operating in a satisfactory condition; respond to service request and

secure necessary assistance; take preventative and emergency action to control malfunctions;

- Operates hand tools, power tools and other shop equipment; fabricates materials and equipment;

- Installs, maintains, and repairs electrical connections, switches, circuits, electrical equipment, and thermostats, and valves.

Comparison of Duties to Maintenance Mechanic 3

The distinguishing characteristics at the MM 3 level note that this is the senior, specialist or leadworker level of the series. Similar to the MM 2 class, incumbents at the MM 3 level perform skilled work in more than one trade or craft. Incumbents typically specialize in one trade or craft but perform journey-level and semi-skilled work in a variety of disciplines, which include plumbing, electrical, welding, carpentry, and machinist work. Some of the examples of work given at the MM 3 level are also similar to the work you perform. However, the primary distinction between the MM 2 and MM 3 is the level of work performed.

In order to gain a better understanding of the work performed, as well as the level of work performed, I also reviewed the Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician, and Plumber classifications. I reviewed these classes because of your work on chilled water systems, as well as the electrical and plumbing work you perform in the course of your regularly assigned duties.

The Refrigeration Mechanic (class code 5440) notes that positions perform "skilled journey-level work in the installation, maintenance, and repair of . . . chilled water equipment, systems, and controls." The distinguishing characteristics note that positions "require full four-year journey-level refrigeration mechanic schooling and knowledge." Additionally, incumbents must be capable of working independently on all maintenance and repair projects.

Some examples of work comparable to the level of work you perform include:

- Installing, operating, maintaining, and repairing all types of refrigeration systems, including chilled water systems;

- Diagnosing, inspecting, troubleshooting, and overhauling electrical control circuits, temperature and pressure controls;

- Testing coils, valves, and connections to determine that systems are properly adjusted;

- Operating and maintaining cooling towers, including water treatment systems;

- Testing and adjusting all types of systems for most efficient performance;

- Positions may lead or instruct helpers as required;

The Electrician classification (class code 5340) notes that incumbents perform "journey-level electrical work." The distinguishing characteristics for this class note that positions are distinguished by the responsibility to perform "journey-level electrical work in the maintenance, repair, and construction of institution facilities on 750 volt system, or less."

Examples of the typical work most relating to your position include:

- Alter, maintain, repair or install wiring, cables, switches, controls, fuse boxes, breaker panels, instrument panels, distribution panels;

- Modify, adjust, maintain, repair or install electric motors, electrical equipment, instruments such as pumps, electrical meters, timers, and fans;

- Inspect electrical systems and equipment to detect and correct faulty components or parts;

- Inspect and maintain high voltage power transmission systems including wires, poles, transformers carrying 750 voltage, or less;

- Develop preliminary cost estimates for installations and repairs.

The Plumber classification (class code 5425) notes that incumbents perform "skilled plumbing, pipefitting and steamfitting work." The distinguishing characteristics for this class note that positions are distinguished by the requirement to perform work in the fields of "plumbing, steamfitting, and pipefitting to alter, repair and maintain buildings, facilities, and equipment."

Examples of the typical work most relating to your position include:

- Inspect, diagnose malfunctions; repair, maintain, and test plumbing, heating, cooling, and other process piping systems;

- Maintain and repair piping, tanks and pressure vessels for fuels, steam, water, air, gas, and draining systems; install service, repair and adjust pumps, ejectors, valves, and coils;

- Construct various types of pipe joints for high or low pressure systems;

- Order materials and supplies as required.

Similar to the Maintenance Mechanic classes, the Refrigeration Mechanic, Electrician, and Plumber classes have higher-level, lead positions. In reviewing the duties and level of responsibility assigned to your position, the work is comparable to the level of work performed by these classifications. However, because you perform work in all areas as it specifically relates to your job of performing skilled work on the water systems and DI water plant, the Maintenance Mechanic series is a better fit. The level of work you perform fits within the MM 2 class because at the MM 2 level, incumbents independently perform journey-level skilled work.

Although Water Distribution and Treatment Supervisor classes existed in general government, they did not exist within the higher education class plan at the time WSU conducted this allocation review. However, when reviewing those classes to gain a better understanding of the type of work and level of work you perform, I concluded some of the typical work examples were similar to the work you perform. For example, those classes included duties such as checking chlorine residual and making adjustments on feed rate, changing cylinders, and cleaning and checking the operation of a residual analyzer, as well as collecting water samples for chemical analysis, maintaining and repairing pressure valves, and maintaining records regarding water quality testing. Incumbents assigned to those classifications, however, were also assigned supervisory responsibilities. Therefore, those classes would have been incompatible with your position had they been available to higher education employees.

I recognize that your work related to water treatment is unique and specialized. I also acknowledge that you perform maintenance and repairs on equipment specifically designed to test and maintain those systems and that your work with the DI water plant is distinct. On a best fit basis, however, your position fits within the Maintenance Mechanic series. In reviewing the level of work envisioned at each level, I conclude your level of responsibility best fits the MM 2 class. Although you may have the ability to perform higher-level work in these areas, the assigned work is structured in such a way that there is a lead position in each specialty area relating to refrigeration, electrical and plumbing (Exhibit 8). Furthermore, the level of work you perform fits the journey-level, which the Washington State Classification and Pay Administrative Guide defines as follows: "[f]ully competent and qualified in all aspects of a body of work and given broad/general guidance, can complete work assignments to standard under minimal supervision." Your independent work is also characteristic of the journey-level.

While it is clear you and Mr. Scharnhorst are highly capable individuals who have invaluable knowledge about the systems you maintain, specifically relating to chemical water treatment, a position review is limited to your assigned duties and responsibilities in comparison with the available job classifications. Therefore, the Maintenance Mechanic 2 classification best describes your position #70965.

Appeal Rights

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board (board) by filing written exceptions to the Director's 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 Director's 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,

Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Supervisor
Legal Affairs Division

c: Zami Wilson, WSU
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits