

October 7, 2008

TO: Cari Trussell
Employee Relations Specialist
Washington Public Employees Association (WPEA)

FROM: Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Carolyn Brooks v. Highline Community College (HCC)
Allocation Review Request ALLO-07-083

On August 6, 2008, I conducted a Director's review conference at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of Dr. Carolyn Brooks' position. You and Dr. Brooks were both present at the Director's review conference, as well as her husband, Dr. Walter Brooks. Cesar Portillo, Executive Director for Human Resources, represented HCC.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to March 16, 2007. As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review conference, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Dr. Brooks' assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position should be reallocated to the Scientific Instructional Technician II classification.

Background

On March 16, 2007, Dr. Brooks submitted a Position Review Request (PRR) form to HCC's Human Resources Department, requesting that her Scientific Instructional Technician I position be reallocated to the Scientific Instructional Technician II classification. On August 21, 2007, Mr. Portillo issued an allocation determination, concluding Dr. Brooks' position best fit the Scientific Instructional Technician I classification.

On September 14, 2007, the Department of Personnel received Dr. Brooks' request for a Director's review of HCC's allocation determination.

Summary of Dr. Brooks' Perspective

Dr. Brooks asserts the duties and responsibilities assigned to her position are split between the Physical Sciences Department (primarily the Chemistry Lab) and the Tutoring Center. Dr. Brooks asserts she coordinates and supervises instructional support functions, which have enhanced the sciences programs as well as student successes. Dr. Brooks performs her duties independently, and she states she has always been recognized as a professional colleague. While her position is technically split between the Chemistry Lab and Tutoring Center, Dr. Brooks contends her work in the Chemistry Lab shifts depending on need and that she generally devotes more time to the Chemistry Lab.

In that capacity, Dr. Brooks states that she coordinates and oversees all preparations for weekly lab experiments; acts as the Chemical Hygiene Officer, promoting and maintaining lab safety; assists instructors and students in the lab; coordinates the use of equipment and chemical storeroom operations and trains and supervises students working in this area; and maintains a computerized inventory of all chemicals, including hazardous chemicals that she assesses and categorizes. Dr. Brooks believes the level of work and responsibility assigned to her position fits the Scientific Instructional Technician II classification.

Summary of HCC's Reasoning

HCC asserts Dr. Brooks' duties and responsibilities are evenly split between two departments, the Chemistry Lab and the Tutoring Center. HCC contends Dr. Brooks' position has been assigned the tasks of planning and scheduling lab assignments and coordinating and overseeing all preparations for classroom and lab demonstrations and experiments. HCC also recognizes that Dr. Brooks serves as a Science Tutor in the Tutoring Center. HCC acknowledges Dr. Brooks performs some higher-level work. However, HCC asserts the Scientific Instructional Technician I classification best describes Dr. Brooks' position.

Rationale for Director's 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. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

The Position Review Request (PRR) describes the purpose of Dr. Brooks' position as follows:

This position exists to coordinate and provide instructional support services for chemistry and other science programs. To further promote student success and retention, responsibilities are divided between the Physical Science Department (primarily chemistry laboratory) and the Tutoring Center. This joint assignment has expanded the role of the Scientific Instructional Technician to include coordinating and providing academic support outside the lab to increase student success in chemistry and other sciences as well as in the college as a whole.

The PRR submitted for the position review indicates Dr. Brooks spends 20 hours per week working in the Physical Science Department and 20 hours per week working in the Tutoring Center (Exhibit Book D, E-1, pages 2-17). On that original PRR, Dr. Brooks identifies her duties in two separate sections: The Physical Science Department and the Tutoring Center. Therefore, the percentages of time spent performing the duties reflect 100% of her time relative to each section. In a subsequent PRR, Dr. Brooks clarifies the percentages of time spent performing her duties as they relate to her overall job (Exhibit Book D, E-1, pages 18-28). During the Director's review conference both parties agreed that the revised PRR provided further clarification of the original PRR, which had been signed by Dr. Brooks and Helen Burn, Chair of the Division of Pure and Applied Sciences, as her supervisor.

In reviewing the PRR, Dr. Brooks' duties and responsibilities related to the Physical Sciences Department are summarized as follows:

- Coordinating and overseeing all preparation for classroom demonstrations and weekly lab experiments. This includes evaluating and preparing for safety hazards and training students and lab workers in the handling and storage of the chemicals.

During the Director's review conference, Dr. Brooks emphasized that the preparation for the lab experiments and demonstrations extended beyond simply getting the materials ready. For example, Dr. Brooks explained that she had also been tasked with developing specific directions and training for safely mixing chemical solutions, safely laying out hazardous materials, and safely storing chemicals and glassware. Dr. Brooks also develops proper procedures for weighing and mixing chemicals, and she supervises lab workers in all lab preparations (set-up of stations) prior to scheduled labs.

- Acting as Chemical Hygiene Officer for the Chemistry Lab. This includes evaluating and preparing for safety hazards; advising instructors and students of potential problems or hazards; assessing chemical properties, including decisions about safety classifications for labeling and storage; and making decisions about the safe collection and disposal of lab wastes. Overseeing lab safety.
- Supervising students in the absence of an instructor or for lab make-ups.
- Coordinating the use of lab and equipment, support services, chemical and supply storeroom operations.
- Maintaining a computerized inventory, which includes designing and updating a computer database of all chemicals. This also involves evaluating Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and assigning and entering chemicals by category for usage, storage, and disposal.

Although the other 50% of Dr. Brooks' duties and responsibilities have been attributed to the Tutoring Center, the majority of those tutoring responsibilities involve coordinating science instructional support. During the Director's review conference, Dr. Brooks explained that her science-related tutoring included mentoring, advising, and evaluating student science tutors, as well as designing curriculum for weekly science tutor training sessions.

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the following standards are primary considerations:

- a) Category concept (if one exists).
- b) Definition or basic function of the class.
- c) Distinguishing characteristics of a class.
- d) Class series concept, definition/basic function, and distinguishing characteristics of other classes in the series in question.

While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification.

The class series concept for the Scientific Instructional Technician classes reads as follows:

Provide instructional support services to scientific instructional programs. Prepare, modify and/or develop instructional programs, teaching aids, materials and equipment associated with classroom and laboratory instruction in undergraduate and graduate level courses. Work may be performed in a variety of disciplines using chemical, microscopic, cytologic, physical (electrical/mechanical) or biologic and bacteriologic procedures and

analyses. This series is distinguished from others by its primary emphasis on science instructional support activities.

The duties and responsibilities assigned to Dr. Brooks' position fit within the Scientific Instructional Technician class series concept.

At the Scientific Instructional Technician I level, the basic function reads as follows:

In a basic or applied science teaching program, provide professional/technical support requiring knowledge of a scientific discipline, electronics and/or engineering.

The distinguishing characteristics of the Scientific Instructional Technician I class note the following:

Under general supervision, provide instructional support to science-related undergraduate courses requiring limited design/development work such as modifying/adapting existing experiments/demonstrations, implementing new experiments or demonstrations using standard techniques/procedures.

The typical work performed at the Scientific Instructional Technician I level includes planning laboratory assignments and schedules; assisting in the development of demonstration models; preparing and conducting lab demonstrations; determining need for materials and equipment; and preparation and set-up.

At the Scientific Instructional Technician II level, the basic function reads as follows:

Develop scientific instructional programs in a basic or applied science teaching program. Coordinate support services for a variety of courses; provide professional/technical support requiring knowledge of a scientific discipline, electronics and/or engineering.

The distinguishing characteristics of the Scientific Instructional Technician II class note the following:

Senior-level class responsible for coordinating instructional support activities, designing/developing instructional programs or designing and constructing equipment. Under general direction, provide support to courses requiring an emphasis in complex design and development tasks such as developing experiments/demonstrations where only general theoretical concepts are identified, designing instructional support applications based on current research findings.

At the Scientific Instructional Technician I level, incumbents work under general supervision while providing instructional support. At the Scientific Instructional Technician II level, incumbents work in senior-level positions under general direction. The Department of Personnel's Classification Glossary defines the level of supervision required as follows:

General supervision – Recurring assignments are carried out within established guidelines without specific instruction. Deviation from normal policies, procedures, and work methods requires supervisory approval, and supervisory guidance is provided in new or unusual situations. The employee's work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with policies and procedures.

General direction – Work assignments are carried out in accordance with established policies and objectives. Position incumbents plan and organize the work, determine the work methods to be employed, and assist in determining priorities and deadlines. Completed work is reviewed in terms of effectiveness in producing expected results.

While the duties and responsibilities of Dr. Brooks' position meet the basic function for both the Scientific Instructional Technician I and II classes, the level of responsibility assigned to her position is consistent with the Scientific Instructional Technician II class. Dr. Brooks performs her duties in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Division of Pure and Applied Sciences, reporting to the Division Chair for administrative purposes. Further, Dr. Brooks has senior-level responsibility for coordinating and developing instructional support in the Chemistry Lab, which extends to the Tutoring Center through science instructional support.

Additionally, the typical work statements of the Scientific Instructional Technician II class most in line with Dr. Brooks' assigned duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Inspecting, testing, and adjusting scientific and lab equipment;
- Developing scientific instructional programs, demonstration models and laboratory procedures;
- Coordinating the scientific preparation for lab programs and field- oriented courses using safety procedures in handling hazardous materials such as acids, pesticides, and radiation;
- Coordinating lab support, maintenance and store room functions;
- Evaluating equipment specifications and making purchase recommendations;

- Providing training for students and faculty in a specialty area such as microbiological techniques or methods of biochemical analysis;
- Maintaining computerized inventory (in this case a database of chemicals and hazardous materials);
- Performing the duties of Scientific Instructional Technician I;
- Acting as coordinator of a laboratory, controlling all equipment, chemicals and use of space;

Although Dr. Brooks may perform some duties consistent with Scientific Instructional Technician I positions, the Scientific Instructional Technician II classification best describes the overall duties and level of responsibility assigned to her position. Effective July 1, 2007, the Instruction & Classroom Support Technician 3 replaced the Scientific Instructional Technician II classification.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

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.

c: Dr. Carolyn Brooks
Cesar Portillo, HCC
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits