State of New Hampshire

PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD
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89-C-109

Appeal of Barbara Gannon
New Hampshire Technical Institute

Classification Appeal

On Wednesday, February 8, 1989, the Personnel Appeals Board (McNicholas, Cushman and Scott) heard the classification appeal of Barbara Gannon, an employee of the New Hampshire Technical Institute. Ms Gannon appeared pro se. Edward J. McCann, Classification and Compensation Administrator, represented the Division of Personnel.

Ms Gannon had requested that her position of Librarian I, salary grade 17 be reclassified to a new title of Assistant Director of Learning Resources, salary grade 20, or to the existing title of Librarian II, salary grade 20. In support of her appeal, Ms Gannon argued that the Division of Personnel had improperly evaluated the attributes of Experience, Initiative and Supervision. She further contended that the difference between her position and that of her supervisor was insufficient to warrant a five salary grade differential between their positions.

Documents submitted by the Division of Personnel indicate that Ms Gannon's position was reviewed both in 1987 and in 1988. In 1987, Ms Gannon's position had been reviewed in conjunction with review of all the professional Librarian positions at the Technical Institute and Vocational-Technical Colleges. On October 10, 1988, the Commissioner for the Department of Postsecondary Vocational Technical Education requested that the position again be reviewed. Submitted with that request was the Position Classification Questionnaire completed by Ms Gannon in July, 1988, which the Board reviewed carefully before rendering its decision.

Before addressing the specific attributes which Appellant takes exception, the Board reviewed the current specification for the position of Librarian I, established in December, 1975 and revised March 24, 1987. That specification defines the position as performing "responsible library duties of a complicated and specialized nature ... responsible for the basic professional library duties in the areas of library science; as a departmental or institutional librarian an employee may be responsible for the overall management of a library where there is limited reference work and no supervision of professional librarians although supervision may be exercised over technical and clerical personnel ..."

The minimum qualifications outlined on the specification call for a Master's degree in Library Science but require no experience. The pointspread for the position, however, credits 40 points to the attribute of experience, where none appears to be required by the specification.

In her request, Ms Gannon asks that the Board increase the points allocated for "Experience" from 40 to 65 points, or to a requirement that an employee at entry level in the position have a minimum of 3 years' experience in the same or a related field. The Board was not persuaded that the duties and responsibilities described by Ms Gannon in both her written and oral presentation warrant such an increase. The Experience attribute standing alone could arguably be increased were it not for the additional requirement of a Master's degree in Library Science. Given the existing award of 40 points for experience where none is required by the specification, the Board voted not to increase this attribute as requested by Appellant.

The second attribute for which Appellant Gannon requests adjustment is Initiative. The Evaluation Manual defines Initiative as "the job's requirement for exercise of judgment, independent action, and creative effort in originating new methods or procedures" and "resourcefulness beyond routine practices" Currently, Ms Gannon's position is rated at the 4th degree, or 40 points for Initiative. She has requested this attribute be increased to the 5th degree, or 80 points.

Upon review of the Evaluation Manual, the Board did not find that Appellant is "... responsible for all planning of work limited only by departmental policy and statute,.." or that Appellant "...Makes major decisions without consulting superior unless major changes or new long term programs are involved." The Board found Ms Gannon's responsibilities better defined by the 4th degree as currently assigned: "Requires considerable initiative to perform the work, though under general direction, of devising new methods, modifying procedures to meet new conditions, and planning and performing unusual or difficult work where general instructions only are available." Therefore, the request for increase to the 5th degree was denied.

Ms Gannon also asked the Board to order increase in the attribute of Supervision from the 3rd degree, or 20 points, to the 4th degree, or 40. points. The 4th degree as defined by the Evaluation Manual requires that "75% to 100% of the time" be involved in supervision and administration. On her Position Classification Questionnaire, Ms Gannon indicated that only 2 - 3% of her time was allotted to supervision. Further, in her written comments, Ms Gannon described her supervisory responsibilities as requiring that she "maintain an even flow of accurate work ... assign work to others, instruct in principles, advise on helpful smaller points, and revise all finished work." She said she corrects unacceptable work methods and careless work, reviewing for quantity and quality the work of all clericals/paraprofessionals when assigned to her area. She stated she is also responsible for "very occasionally" disciplining work-study students.

In considering the requested increase for this attribute, the Board reviewed the definition of Supervision provided in the Evaluation Manual. "This factor is used to measure how much responsibility is required for controlling,

directing, training, planning and scheduling the work of others. Consideration must be given to the NATURE of the control exercised as well as the LEVEL of the position controlled. Given that definition, the Board was not persuaded that Ms. Gannon's responsibilities justified increase to the 3rd degree for the attribute of Supervision.

Based upon the foregoing, the Board voted to deny Ms. Gannon's appeal. In so doing, however, the Board noted that its decision should not be construed as a reflection upon the obvious degree of dedication and professionalism Ms. Gannon brings to her work. The Technical Institute is indeed fortunate to have in its employ an individual with a demonstrated willingness to embrace the technological advancements in her field, and who seems eager to share her expertise with both her colleagues and the students at the Institute.

The Board must render its decision, however, based upon an objective assessment of the minimum requirements at entry level in its review of a position classification decision. Therefore, while an individual's personal qualifications and performance standards may far exceed the minimum requirements for a position, and may be of immeasurable benefit to the employing agencies, they can not be considered in assessing the appropriate position allocation at entry level.

THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

Patrick J. McNicholas, Chairman

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cc: Barbara Gannon
New Hampshire Technical Institute

Mary Pillsbury Brown, Commissioner
Department of Postsecondary Technical Education

Virginia A. Vogel
Director of Personnel

DATED: August 21, 1989