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Classification Study/Position Review:
Paula Mushrush,
Administrative Services Manager

Final Report

County of Humboldt

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Background	1
CLASSIFICATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION.....	1
Findings.....	1
Classification Recommendation.....	4
Salary Recommendation	5
CONCLUSION.....	7



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In July 2018, the County of Humboldt (“County”) contracted with Koff & Associates (“K&A”) to conduct a classification study for the Administrative Services Manager position allocated to the Planning Department encumbered by Paula Mushrush. All findings and recommendations are included in this report.

This position review process was precipitated by the incumbent’s assertion that the preponderance of her duties and responsibilities are not aligned with the current classification allocation, and therefore the County requested that the position be studied.

The goal of the study was to:

- Obtain detailed information about the position encumbered by Ms. Mushrush through a variety of techniques, including a written Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ) as well as interviews with the incumbent and her supervisor (John Ford);
- Analyze the work assigned to the position to identify the major duties and responsibilities;
- Analyze the County’s current description for Administrative Services Manager;
- Make a recommendation regarding the appropriateness of the current classification allocation of the position relative to the duties performed by the incumbent; and
- Make a recommendation regarding an appropriate salary range for the classification.

CLASSIFICATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings

When positions are classified, the focus is on assigned job duties and the job-related requirements for successful performance, not on individual employee capabilities or volume of work performed. Positions are thus evaluated and classified on the basis of such factors as the nature and level of work performed, the complexity of the work, the authority delegated to make decisions and take action, the responsibility for the work of others and/or for budget expenditures, contacts with others (both inside and outside of the organization), the impact of the position on the organization, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the work. Narrative on some of these factors is presented below.

- Major duties and responsibilities of the position as detailed in the Job Analysis Questionnaire completed by the incumbent:
 - Administrative services integration across Department sections (25% of work time) – The incumbent is responsible for ensuring necessary administrative services support levels across the functional areas of the department. This



requires that she independently tracks new, upcoming, and proposed projects across the various functions of the Planning Department including planning, building, and code compliance to ensure that fiscal and human resources are sufficient for the sections to accomplish the work. Ms. Mushrush must be knowledgeable of the different functional areas of the department at a level necessary to identify resource needs and must collaborate with department and section management for needs assessment and exchange of information.

- Human resource management (20% of work time) – Ms. Mushrush is responsible for supervision (either directly or through subordinate levels of supervision) for twenty-two (22) employees at the time of her interview with the anticipation that this would increase to twenty-five (25) in the upcoming months. Related duties include selection and onboarding of new hires (hiring authority for her direct reports has been delegated to Ms. Mushrush by the department director), providing or coordinating training for new employees, reviewing work, setting priorities for assigned work units, conducting performance evaluations, implementing progressive discipline procedures, and recommending termination when necessary. In addition to human resources responsibilities directly related to administrative services support staff, Ms. Mushrush provides human resources support to the other sections of the department including answering human resources-related questions for section and department managers and executive staff; ensuring that the department is compliant with human resources laws and rules; ensuring that necessary documentation is complete and compliant with County rules and regulations for personnel actions; assisting with recruitment and onboarding efforts; and liaising with the County Human Resources Department on behalf of section and department management.
- Regulatory compliance and contract administration (12% of work time) – The incumbent is responsible for overseeing, consulting on, or directly participating in a number of activities related to the administrative aspects of meeting regulatory requirements and contract management and administration for the department. Many of the Planning department’s functions have regulatory requirements around timelines and methods for noticing stakeholders and the public and to this end the incumbent ensures that the department is in compliance with regulations by consulting with department and section managers and following through on actions that must be taken. Additionally, for grant-funded activities, Ms. Mushrush ensures that fiscal records are maintained and reported consistent with grant provisions. The incumbent also prepares and administers contracts related to grants and cannabis contracting, and advises section managers on the oversight of four other major department contracts.
- Fiscal and financial management (12% of work time) – Ms. Mushrush is responsible for the development and monitoring of the departmental budget in collaboration with, and subject to the approval of, the Director of Planning and



Building. Budget development requires review of budgets submitted by section managers, consolidation of section budgets into an overall departmental operating budget, general knowledge of revenue streams and expenditures for each section, and development of supplemental reports to the Board of Supervisors. Monitoring of the budget is performed by the incumbent throughout the year, and to this end Ms. Mushrush is required to ensure that line items are not exceeded and to initiate funds transfers as needed. In addition to budget development and monitoring, the incumbent is responsible for reviewing, researching, and approving payables; communicating with department management regarding expenditures; and coordinating activities with the Auditor’s office. The incumbent is responsible for independently monitoring the department budget absent oversight, exercising discretion and judgement, and elevating matters to the Director on an as-needed basis.

- Administrative support systems management (12% of work time) – Ms. Mushrush is responsible for oversight of the administrative support systems for the department. To this end, she develops, modifies, and administers policies and procedures for proper handling and routing of incoming and outgoing communicate, contracts, and other documents and directly manages outgoing communication with particular stakeholders. Examples include the identification and proper follow through for items that are subject to Planning Commission review and approval, reports that require administrative decision, and Board of Supervisors directives.
- Overall department coordination (19% of work time) – The incumbent is responsible for the coordination of departmental activities with other County departments including the County Administrative Office, Auditor, County Counsel, Human Resources, and Payroll as well as other departments to ensure proper transfer of information regarding projects and functions in common. In addition, there are a number of “miscellaneous” department functions that are outside of the purview of planning and building that default to the incumbent’s position including business license review and grant implementation for housing.
- Decision making – Ms. Mushrush is responsible for the supervision of over 25 staff members either directly or through subordinate supervision who are responsible for providing fiscal, human resources, and clerical support to a department of approximately 75 staff members. The work requires that the incumbent exercise a high degree of independent judgment and discretion on matters critical to the operation and function of the Planning Department.
- Contacts – The position has contacts internally with coworkers, staff, and department management as well as staff, executives, and management from other County departments. Externally, the incumbent has contact with regulatory agencies, Planning Commission, other municipalities, vendors, developers, and the general public.



Classification Recommendation

It is our assessment that the duties and responsibilities of this position are adequately and accurately captured in the classification description for Administrative Services Manager, and it is our recommendation that the position remain allocated as such. There have been noteworthy changes in the Planning Department in the recent past which have resulted in changes to Ms. Mushrush's position resulting in her request for a classification review of her position. First, there has been a sizable increase in staffing of the department which has resulted in a considerable increase in the work volume of the position. Second, the long-term absence of the department's Business Manager resulted in a shift in the assignment of fiscal and budgetary-related duties.

With respect to work volume, it is reasonable to expect that an increase in department staff size has impacted the incumbent's workload for two key reasons. First, as the Administrative Services Manager, Ms. Mushrush is responsible for oversight of the human resources-related activities and enforcement of County human resources rules, policies, and procedures for all sections in the department – not just for those employees in her own section. This includes onboarding procedures, personnel actions such as step increases, and annual performance evaluation schedules. These responsibilities become more time consuming as the staff size of the department increases. Likewise, the increase in staff size is indicative of an increase in services provided by the department which affects all aspects of administrative services including fiscal, human resources, and clerical support which results in a larger programmatic area for the incumbent to manage. However, increase in work volume does not necessarily indicate a change in the level of complexity or scope of responsibility of the work itself. The issue is not how much work, but what type of work has been added to the position. If the type of work performed as part of the additional duties is comparable in terms of the complexity and level of responsibility, then the issue becomes a staffing concern addressed through the budget and scheduling processes, not a classification issue addressed through reclassifying the position. In the case of Ms. Mushrush's position, the added work volume does not consist of duties that are of a different level of complexity and responsibility. The incumbent acknowledged that the type of work she is performing as a result of the growth in staff size is not different, but that her workload has increased significantly. As such, reclassifying the position is not the appropriate course of action.

Regarding the long-term absence of the department's Business Manager, this has impacted the incumbent's position in a manner similar to the aforementioned insofar as the shift in duties and assignments resulted in an increase in the incumbent's work volume. As Ms. Mushrush's direct report, the Business Manager's duties and assignments were ultimately Ms. Mushrush's responsibility that had been appropriately delegated to the Business Manager. In the absence of the Business Manager, Ms. Mushrush performs duties which previously she was overseeing but in which she was not directly participating. The Business Manager's duties include budget and fiscal duties which are within the scope of responsibility of the Administrative Services Manager so while the absorption and reassignment of these duties has increased volume of work, the scope of responsibility and complexity of the work itself has not been affected.



When evaluating the allocation of a position, it is necessary to: (i) identify the duties that the incumbent is currently being required to perform; (ii) determine if those duties are captured in the current job description; and (iii) identify the percentage of duties being performed, if any, which are outside of the current classification. The test is not whether or not the current incumbent possesses the knowledge, skills, and qualifications for a given classification. Rather, the test is determining the duties performed and the level and scope of responsibility of the position itself regardless of who encumbers it.

Recommendation: Maintain the allocation of Administrative Services Manager for the position encumbered by Paula Mushrush.

Salary Recommendation

In addition to studying the classification description and allocation for the Administrative Services Manager position allocated to the Planning Department, the scope of this study also included salary review and recommendation for the classification.

For purposes of this study, we utilized internal salary relationship theories to determine a salary recommendation. When an individual classification or classification series is being studied, utilizing market data to develop salary recommendations can create compaction between levels and bodies of work and can be inconsistent with the practices and philosophies of the current compensation system. Therefore, absent a study of an entire compensation system or a substantial portion thereof, internal salary relationships are used for analyzing salaries and developing recommendations.

Since the Business Manager is the highest level direct report to the Administrative Services Manager, we evaluated the differential between the Business Manager’s salary range and that of the Administrative Services Manager. In addition, we calculated and evaluated the differentials between the Administrative Services Manager and all direct reports. The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Classification	Current Salary Range	Percent from Administrative Services Manager (Range 456)
Business Manager	450	-3.0%
Departmental IS Analyst	416	-20%
Administrative Analyst II	414	-21%
GIS Specialist	412	-22%



Classification	Current Salary Range	Percent from Administrative Services Manager (Range 456)
Housing and Community Programs Specialist	368	-44%
Planning Technician II	366	-45%
<i>Executive Secretary*</i>	346	-55%
<i>Senior Office Assistant*</i>	336	-60%
Legal Office Assistant II	316	-70%
Office Assistant II	301	-77.5%

**The Senior Office Assistant position has recently been studied and has been recommended for reclassification to Executive Secretary. Differentials for both the proposed and current classification allocation for the position have been included in this table.*

Recommended salary differentials between types and levels of work vary based on factors such as the specific body of work, education and training qualification requirements, and agency pay philosophies; however, the following are standard human resources practices that are commonly applied when making salary recommendations based upon internal relationships:

- Paraprofessional classes are typically placed 30% to 50% below the professional classifications within the body of work.
- The differential between a trainee and experienced (or journey) class in a series (I/II or Trainee/Experienced) is generally 10% to 15%;
- A lead or advanced journey-level (III or Senior-level) class is generally placed 10% to 15% above the journey-level.
- A full, first-level supervisory class is normally placed at least 10% to 25% above the highest level supervised depending upon the breadth and scope of supervision.
- A manager-level class is typically placed at least 15% to 20% above the highest level supervised depending upon the scope of overarching managerial responsibilities.

Based on these criteria, the differential of 3% between the Administrative Services Manager and the Business Manager is insufficient by comparison to the differences in the scope of responsibility and level of complexity of the work performed by the two classifications. In addition, the 21% differential between the Administrative Services Manager and the Administrative Analyst II classes is an insufficient differential between a journey-level analyst and a manager-level classification within a similar body of work.

In order to compensate for differences in the scope of responsibility, complexity of work, and consequence of error associated with the Administrative Services Manager compared to those of the Business Manager and Administrative Analyst II classifications, we recommend placement



of the Administrative Services Manager on range 480. This recommendation provides a 15% differential above Business Manager and a 33% differential above Administrative Analyst II which are more appropriate given the differences in the duties and responsibilities between the classes.

Salary relationships between Administrative Services Manager and its direct reports at the recommended Range 480 are displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Classification	Current Salary Range	Percent from Administrative Services Manager at Recommended Range 480
Business Manager	450	-15%
Departmental IS Analyst	416	-32%
Administrative Analyst II	414	-33%
GIS Specialist	412	-34%
Housing and Community Programs Specialist	368	-56%
Planning Technician II	366	-57%
<i>Executive Secretary**</i>	<i>346</i>	<i>-67%</i>
<i>Senior Office Assistant**</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>-72%</i>
Legal Office Assistant II	316	-82%
Office Assistant II	301	-89.5%

***The Senior Office Assistant position has recently been studied and has been recommended for reclassification to Executive Secretary. Differentials for both the proposed and current classification allocation for the position have been included in this table.*

Recommendation: Allocate Administrative Services Manager to salary range 480 (\$5731.60 to \$7354.94/month).

CONCLUSION

This Final Report presents the process, methodologies and findings with respect to the Administrative Services Manager position encumbered by Paula Mushrush. We want to thank the County and its staff for their cooperation and participation in study activities to ensure the study is a success.



Once the County has had an opportunity to review this report, we can arrange to discuss any comments, concerns or issues within the report. In the meantime, should you require any clarification on the contents of this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted by,
Koff & Associates

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