



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Kelly Burns,
Stockton University

CSC Docket No. 2026-436

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE CHAIR/
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

Classification Appeal

ISSUED: June 17, 2026 (SLK)

Kelly Burns appeals the determination of Stockton University (University)¹ that the proper classification of her position with the University is Professional Services Specialist 4 Administrative Services (PSS4). The appellant seeks a Professional Services Specialist 3 Administrative Services (PSS3) classification.

The record in the present matter establishes that the appellant's permanent title is PSS4. The appellant sought reclassification of her position, alleging that her duties were more closely aligned with the duties of a PSS3. The appellant reports to Laura Hughes, Professional Services Specialist 2 Administrative Services (PSS2). In support of her request, the appellant submitted an Application for Reclassification for AFT Professional Staff (Application for Reclassification)² detailing the duties that she performed as a PSS4. The University reviewed and analyzed the Application for Reclassification³ and all information and documentation submitted. It also interviewed the appellant and her supervisor. In its decision, the University determined that the duties performed by the appellant were consistent with the definition and examples of work included in the job specification for PSS4.

¹ Pursuant to a Delegation Order, Memorandum of Understanding, signed May 25, 2023, the parties agreed that the University would initially review the position reclassification requests of its employees, and then the determinations would be referred to the Civil Service Commission for final determination.

² This is a University form which it uses in making its first-level classification determination.

³ After the University's July 10, 2025, determination, the appellant completed a Position Classification Questionnaire (PCQ), which was submitted as part of her appeal to the Civil Service Commission.

On appeal, the appellant states that she believes that there was a misunderstanding of her duties. She presents that she does not merely train students. Rather, she recruits, interviews, selects, onboards, trains, and supervises student employees, which includes independent decisions on scheduling and conflict management as she emphasizes that she is the sole decision maker on hiring students, the independent supervisor of these students, and the sole creator and executor of their training. The appellant submits examples of her work in this area.

The appellant asserts that she does not only provide assistance with student programs as indicated in the determination. Rather, she provides that she is the point person and primary decision-maker on all aspects of the program while working directly with students and student-facing offices, such as Administration and Finance. She notes that her work involves various University software systems to make decisions regarding the program from start to finish. The appellant indicates that she receives, reviews, and makes independent determinations of the eligibility of all applications and contacts students to answer questions, provide guidance, and, if appropriate, disburse awards. Additionally, she presents that she informs students regarding her determinations concerning assistance applications and provides resources. Further, the appellant presents that she makes decisions regarding the advancement, marketing, and finances of the programs, including possessing the discretion regarding the spending and allocations of the \$84,500 Food Assistance Program budget. She attaches examples to illustrate her work.

Additionally, the appellant notes that since finances are involved, checks and balances are required. She states that this process is similar as to when an Assistant Supervisor within the Division of Student Affairs needs a Business Unit Manager's approval for purchases over \$1,000. She reiterates that she oversees the totality of the program and manages the process from start to finish by making independent decisions every step of the way. The appellant presents that she determines the amount and eligibility on her own, answers the student questions directly, receives the application, creates the case in the University's case management software system, reviews the student's financial, academic, and disciplinary statuses, and works directly with other University departments as needed. Thereafter, she indicates that she decides if the student is eligible for an award, and if so, how much, and then notifies the Business Unit Manager. The appellant states that she will sometimes consult with a manager regarding her findings to get a variety of perspectives, which she provides is common among her team. Subsequently, she creates the award. The appellant presents examples to demonstrate this work.

Moreover, the appellant asserts that the determination underestimates the time that she spends performing higher level duties. In that regard, she states that 15 percent of her time involves solely managing the Osprey Pantries, which involves budgeting, purchasing, creating contracts, and coordinating day-to-day operations;

15 percent of her time is spent solely selecting, training, onboarding, and supervising students; and 25 percent of her time is spent on the Student Relief Fund, emergency load, and restricted meals funds and vouchers. Therefore, the appellant asserts that she spends 55 percent of her time on difficult tasks that are above her current PSS4 classification. Additionally, she submits her calendar to showcase her increase in meetings with student applicants, student employees, external resource offices, potential collaborators, and university offices, as well as running the entirety of the Food Assistance Programs.

It is noted that in the University's July 3, 2025 interview with the appellant's supervisor, her supervisor indicated, regarding student relief funds, the appellant does an "initial analyses" and provides a "recommendation" to the Business Unit Manager.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:3-3.9(e) states that in classification appeals, the appellant shall provide copies of all materials submitted, the determination received from the lower level, statements as to which portions of the determination are being disputed, and the basis for appeal. Information and/or argument which was not presented at the prior level of appeal shall not be considered.

The definition section of the PSS4 job specification states:

Under the coordination of a Professional Services Specialist 2 or higher supervisory officer in the Administrative Services area at a State college, is responsible for performing basic professional functions using established policies, procedures, precedents, and guidelines; does related work as required.

The definition section of the PSS3 job specification states:

Under the direction of a Professional Services Specialist 2 or higher supervisory officer in the Administrative Services area at a State college, is responsible for independently performing professional work of greater difficulty using established policies, procedures, precedents, and guidelines; does related work as required.

In this present matter, a review of the job specifications indicates that the distinguishing factor between the two titles is that PSS4s perform "basic" professional functions while PSS3s "independently" perform professional work of "greater difficulty." Initially, it is noted that the appellant, in her Application for

Reclassification, acknowledges that 20 percent of her duties are PSS4 duties.⁴ Concerning overseeing the day-to-day coordination of the Osprey Pantries (15 percent – most difficult task), the Student Relief Funds (10 percent – second most difficult task), and the determination of the Restricted Meal Funds and Emergency Loans for students (15 percent – the third and four most difficult tasks), which the appellant indicates on her Application for Reclassification are her most difficult tasks and comprise 40 percent of her time,⁵ while the appellant contends that she determines the students assistance funds independently and the Business Unit Manager is just providing a mere check, the appellant’s supervisor describes this task as the appellant performing an “initial analyses” and then the appellant goes to the Business Unit Manager with a “recommendation.”⁶ Therefore, the record does not indicate that the appellant is exercising independent judgment of greater difficulty in this area. Further, other communications that she submits, such as being the point of contact for students for these programs, are customer service tasks that do not rise to the level of a PSS3 classification. It is also noted that the appellant’s Application for Reclassification indicates that her remaining duties are less difficult. Therefore, the record indicates that the majority of the appellant’s duties fall within a PSS4 classification.

Additionally, to the extent that the appellant is claiming that some of her duties as a PSS4 align with the PSS3 examples of work, such as the hiring, managing, and training student staff, the fact that some of an employee’s assigned duties may compare favorably with some examples of work found in a given job specification is not determinative for classification purposes, since, by nature, examples of work are utilized for illustrative purposes only. Moreover, it is not uncommon for an employee to perform some duties which are above or below the level of work which is ordinarily performed. For purposes of determining the appropriate level within a given class, and for overall job specification purposes, the definition portion of the job specification is appropriately utilized.

Accordingly, there is not a sufficient basis to disturb the determination that the appellant is properly classified as a PSS4.

⁴ The appellant lists six separate duties which add up to 20 percent, which she indicates on her Application for Reclassification as duties which fit in her current job description’s title.

⁵ There is a discrepancy between the appellant’s PCQ and her Application for Reclassification. On the appellant’s PCQ, the appellant lists overseeing the day-to-day coordination of the Osprey Pantries as her most difficult task comprising of 20 percent of her time, the Student Relief funds as being her second most difficult task comprising of 19 percent of her time, and the determination of the Restricted Meal Funds and Emergency Loan for students as being the fourth and sixth most difficult tasks which combined comprise 19 percent of her time.

⁶ In the appointing authority’s July 10, 2025 determination, it indicates that the appellant reviews, and evaluates student applications for student relief funds, restricted meal funds, and emergency loans, but she does not oversee the totality of these programs from start to finish, managing and overseeing all financial aspects, and being the sole-decision maker.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED ON
THE 16TH DAY OF JUNE, 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Cruz", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

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