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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD

EXECUTIVE
ETHICS BOARD

In the Matter of:

Laura Rustay

Respondent.

No. 2012-066

STIPULATED FACTS,
CONCLUSIONS AND ORDER

I. STIPULATION

THIS STIPULATION is entered into under WAC 292-100-090(1) between the Respondent, LAURA RUSTAY, and Board Staff of the WASHINGTON STATE EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD (Board) through MELANIE DeLEON, Executive Director. The following stipulated facts, conclusions, and agreed order will be binding upon the parties if fully executed, and if accepted by the Board without modification(s), and will not be binding if rejected by the Board, or if the Respondent does not accept the Board's proposed modification(s), if any, to the stipulation.

Section 1: PROCEDURAL FACTS

1.1. On November 9, 2012, the Executive Ethics Board (Board) initiated a complaint alleging that Laura Rustay, Human Resource Consultant (HRC) Assistant, Clark College may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act when she used state resources to conduct an outside business regarding American College Testing (ACT). The Board found Reasonable Cause on May 10, 2013.

1.2. The Board is authorized under RCW 34.05.060 to establish procedures for attempting and executing informal settlement of matters in lieu of more formal proceedings under the Administrative Procedures Act, including adjudicative hearings. The Board has established such procedures under WAC 292-100-090.

1.3. Laura Rustay understands that if Board staff proves any or all of the alleged violations at a hearing, the Board may impose sanctions, including a civil penalty under RCW 42.52.480(1)(b) of up to \$5,000, or the greater of three times the economic value of anything received or sought in violation of chapter 42.52 RCW, for each violation found. The Board may also order the payment of costs, including reasonable investigative costs, under RCW 42.52.480(1)(c).

1.4. Laura Rustay recognizes that the evidence available to the Board staff is such that the Board may conclude she violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. Therefore, in the interest of seeking an informal and expeditious resolution of this matter, the parties agree to entry of the stipulated findings of fact, conclusions of law and agreed order set forth below.

1.5. Laura Rustay waives the opportunity for a hearing, contingent upon acceptance of this stipulation by the Board, or her acceptance of any modification(s) proposed by the Board, pursuant to the provisions of WAC 292-100-090(2) which provides in part:

The board has the option of accepting, rejecting, or modifying the proposed stipulation or asking for additional facts to be presented. If the board accepts the stipulation or modifies the stipulation with the agreement of the respondent, the board shall enter an order in conformity with the terms of the stipulation. If the board rejects the stipulation or the respondent does not agree to the board's proposed modifications to the stipulation, the normal process will continue. The proposed stipulation and information obtained during formal settlement discussions shall not be admitted into evidence at a subsequent public hearing.

1.6. If the Board accepts this stipulation, the Board will release and discharge Laura Rustay from all further ethics proceedings under chapter 42.52 RCW for matters arising out of the facts contained in the complaint in this matter, subject to payment of the full amount of the civil penalty due and owing, any other costs imposed, and compliance with all other terms and conditions of the agreed order. Laura Rustay in turn agrees to release and discharge the Board, its officers, agents and employees from all claims, damages, and causes of action arising out of this complaint and this stipulation and agreed order.

1.7. If this Stipulation is accepted, this Stipulation and Order does not purport to settle any other claims between Laura Rustay and the Washington State Executive Ethics Board, the State of Washington, or other third party, which may be filed in the future.

1.8. If this Stipulation is accepted, this Stipulation and Order is enforceable under RCW 34.05.578 and any other applicable statutes or rules.

1.9. If the Board rejects this stipulation, or if Laura Rustay does not accept the Board's proposed modification(s), if any, this matter will be scheduled for an administrative hearing in front of the Board and Laura Rustay waives any objection to participation by any Board member at any subsequent hearing to whom this stipulation was presented for approval under WAC 292-100-090(2). Further, Laura Rustay understands and agrees that this proposed stipulation and information obtained during any formal settlement discussions held between the parties shall not be admitted into evidence at a subsequent public hearing, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.

Section 2: FINDINGS OF FACT

2.1. Ms. Rustay was a HRC Assistant at Clark College and was serving in that capacity for all times pertinent to this investigation.

2.2. Ms. Rustay contracted directly with ACT to serve as the Test Center Supervisor. American College Testing is not part of Clark College, but a private nonprofit company that is responsible for administering the ACT test—the college admissions and placement test. As the ACT Test Center Supervisor, she supervised three other Clark College employees who assisted her in proctoring the ACT exams. Ms. Rustay and the three other Clark college employees were paid directly from ACT for their services.

2.3. ACT examinations have been conducted at Clark College for many years and ACT has always paid a room rental fee.

2.4. Ms. Rustay used the College email system to advise the other Clark College employees on upcoming ACT testing dates, to request availability for their assistance to proctor upcoming exams, and information regarding payment for their services from ACT.

2.5. Ms. Rustay sent/received less than 20 emails regarding ACT from December 2011 to May 2012. The emails were used to schedule proctoring services between herself and other college employees. The three other Clark College employees are Heidi Bealer, Viktoryia Camp, and Polina Kozhemyakim.

2.6. The ACT exams were conducted on Saturdays. The college was not paying Ms. Rustay for the times she was the ACT Test Site Supervisor; she was paid by ACT for this time.

Section 3: CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

3.1. Pursuant to chapter 42.52 RCW, the Executive Ethics Board has jurisdiction over Ms. Rustay and over the subject matter of this complaint.

3.2. Pursuant to WAC 292-100-090(1), the parties have the authority to resolve this matter under the terms contained herein, subject to Board approval.

3.3. The Ethics in Public Service Act, Chapter 42.52 RCW, prohibits state employees from using state resources for their benefit. RCW 42.52.160(1) states:

No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officer's or employee's official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee, or another.

3.4. Based on Findings of Fact 2.1 through 2.6, Ms. Rustay used state resources for personal benefit in support of an outside business in violation of RCW 42.52.160 and WAC 292-110-010.

3.5. The Board is authorized to impose sanctions for violations to the Ethics Act pursuant to RCW 42.52.360. The Board has set forth criteria in WAC 292-120-030 for imposing sanctions and consideration of any mitigating or aggravating factors.

Section 4: AGGRAVATING AND MITIGATING FACTORS

In determining the appropriateness of the civil penalty, the Board reviewed the criteria in WAC 292-120-030. Mitigating factors in this case include: Ms. Rustay violations of the Ethics Act were unintentional and at the time she felt that she was promoting Clark College, when Ms. Rustay was made aware of the violation she immediately stopped using the state email system to communicate regarding ACT, Ms. Rustay had not received any prior ethics training and Ms. Rustay spent many hours volunteering at the college.

Section 5: AGREED ORDER

5.1 For the violating RCW 42.52.160, Laura Rustay will pay a civil penalty in the amount of, two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). The Board agrees to suspend

(\$1,750.00) on the condition that Laura Rustay complies with all terms and conditions of this Stipulation and Order and commits no further violations of RCW 42.52 for a period of two years from the date this agreement is executed.

5.2 The civil penalty of \$750.00 is payable in full, to the State Executive Ethics Board within 45 days after this stipulation is accepted by the Board, or as otherwise agreed to by the parties.

II. CERTIFICATION

I, Laura Rustay, hereby certify that I have read this Stipulation and Agreed Order in its entirety; that my counsel of record, if any, has fully explained the legal significance and consequence of it; that I fully understand and agree to all of it; and that it may be presented to the Board without my appearance. I knowingly and voluntarily waive my right to a hearing in this matter; and if the Board accepts the Stipulation and Agreed Order, I understand that I will receive a signed copy.

Laura Rustay 7/10/13
Laura Rustay Date
Respondent

Stipulated to and presented by:

Melanie deLeon 7/15/13
Melanie deLeon Date
Executive Director


II. ORDER

Having reviewed the proposed Stipulation, WE, THE STATE OF WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD, pursuant to WAC 292-100-090, HEREBY ORDER that the Stipulation is

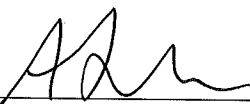
- ACCEPTED in its entirety;
- REJECTED in its entirety;
- MODIFIED. This Stipulation will become the Order of the Board if the

Respondent approves* the following modification(s):

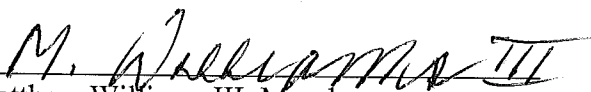
DATED this 13th day of September 2013



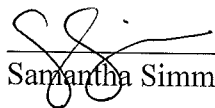
Lisa Marsh, Chair



Anna Dudek Ross, Vice-Chair



Matthew Williams III, Member



Samantha Simmons, Member

* I, Laura Rustay, accept/do not accept (circle one) the proposed modification(s).

Laura Rustay, Respondent Date