

INTERPRETER COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY, MARCH 10, 2006

Present: Justice Susan Owens, Salah Dandan, Emma Garkavi, Jeff Hall, Ann Macfarlane, Frank Maiocco, Judge Ron Mamiya, Steve Muzik, and Commissioner Virginia Rockwood

AOC staff: Regina McDougall, Tina Williamson and Beth Flynn

Absent: Judge Dennis Yule and Rosa Cabrera

Welcome and Introductions

Justice Susan Owens called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

All members present introduced themselves and Ann Macfarlane distributed information from the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT).

The members present reviewed the December 2, 2005 meeting summary, the Commission roster and the meeting schedule. Regina requested that any updates to the meeting schedule be emailed to her.

BJA – Court Funding Task Force

Jeff Hall reported on the BJA Court Funding Task Force. He stated that funding for interpreter services is a focus for the Implementation Committee. They will request state funds to pay for direct interpreter services. That has been the Committee's focus but it could change as additional interpreter items develop.

Data Collection System: In order to drive the request for funding interpreter services, Jeff is trying to decide the best way to gather statistics from the courts regarding interpreter usage (what languages they need interpreters for, how many interpreters are hired and what the frequency is, how many are non-certified interpreters, what the costs are, etc.). Without statistics, it's difficult to make a case for additional funding and Jeff is hesitant to go forward without data.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Planning: Regina McDougall, Jeff Patnode and James Curtis met regarding the Language Access Questionnaire for Washington Courts. The questionnaire and a list of counties that will be answering the questionnaire were included in the meeting materials. The goal in each county is to meet with superior court and courts of limited jurisdiction personnel for an interview. Each county will receive the questionnaire prior to the visit so they'll have time before the meeting to gather all the requested data. The lack of verified data is problematic in trying to do a comprehensive LEP plan. Tentatively, Regina would like to accompany James Curtis on as many court visits as possible to get an idea of local changes that can be implemented to ensure good interpreter services delivery. Some ideas for better interpreter services delivery are outreach and connection to LEP in areas being served, language cards at clerks' counters, translated brochures, etc.

ACTION ITEM:

The plan remains that the Issues Committee will work on the LEP plan and the Columbia Legal Services/NW Justice Project will continue developing the Best Practices Manual.

Committee Updates

Issues Committee: There was nothing to report for the Issues Committee.

Discipline Committee: Jeff Hall reported on the progress of the Discipline Committee. The committee is currently working on one issue and so far, two out of three votes on the issue have been received.

Judicial Education and Court Manager Education Committee: Frank Maiocco reported that the committee has been fairly dormant since the last meeting but the committee members are committed to meeting by conference call in the next few weeks. Regina suggested the committee members go to the upcoming spring conferences and promote the Judicial Reference Guide that was distributed to all judges in June 2004.

Testing and Training – 2006

The dates are set for the orientations (May 13 in Yakima and May 20 in Bellevue), written exam (June 24), pre oral exam workshop (September 9-10) and the oral exam (October 14).

The Registered written exam will be held in conjunction with the Certified written exam on June 24. Because of this, there could be a large increase in attendance at the orientations and the written exam.

Make Up Oral Exam: Regina discussed the re-testing issue. Two candidates are eligible to retake the oral exam based on policy. When one of the candidates was taking the exam in October, the test proctor experienced some technical difficulty. The interpreter complained that the minor disruption caused him to do poorly on the simultaneous section of the exam.

Regina recommends that AOC host the exam at Bellevue Community College in late April 2006. Because of the technical difficulty, the cost for Mr. Vega's exam will be paid through the program budget. Ms. Taylor (should she decide to take the exam) would be charged the cost of rating the exam as determined by the National Center for State Courts. Both Mr. Vega and Ms. Taylor would be required to retake all three sections of the exam.

Motion by Commissioner Virginia Rockwood to accept the AOC staff recommendation.

Motion seconded by Jeff Hall.

Motion passed.

2005 Oral Exam Rescore Requests: It is up to the Issues Committee to decide oral exam rescore requests. One of the requirements for a rescore is that the candidate has to pass two sections and fail the third section of the oral exam. Four people sent letters to AOC regarding their oral exam scores. Two candidates failed all three sections of the exam so aren't eligible for a rescore and the two remaining candidates didn't score high enough on the third section to qualify for a retest (they needed at least 65%).

ACTION ITEM:

AOC will try to find out from the National Center what their measure of error is for the scoring of the test to determine if it is possible for the rescore to put the two candidates who only failed one section of the exam over 65% to qualify them to retake the exam.

AOC Interpreter Project Updates

Registered Exam: AOC is kicking off the Registered Interpreter Program pursuant to the 2005 Legislature's funding of Interpreter Program enhancements. Tina Williamson was hired to staff the program. It will require interpreters who interpret in any language that AOC doesn't currently certify, to pass the multiple-choice section of the written exam. AOC will create a list on their website of the Registered interpreters so courts will have contact information for interpreters in various languages. The Registered interpreters will also be required to attend some continuing education courses in order to remain on the Registered list.

ACTION ITEM:

Tina will work with the Minority and Justice Commission, Bellevue Community College and courts to post notices and spread the word about the Registered interpreter written exam which will be held in conjunction with the Certified interpreter written exam on June 24. Additional suggestions include using WITS, Refugee Services, Columbia Legal Services, NW Justice Project, Seattle University, REWA (Women's Alliance), and post flyers in colleges, grocery stores, courts, newspapers and on radio stations. Also, notify defense attorneys and DV agencies.

Policy Manual Updates: If you would like something changed in the Policy Manual, bring your concerns or issues to the next Commission meeting. Please let Regina know in advance so she can put the issues/concerns on the agenda.

Issues

Khmer and Laotian Exams: AOC no longer certifies interpreters in Khmer and Laotian because the National Center for State Courts said they never validated the Khmer exam and the Laotian exam has some technical problems.

ACTION ITEM:

Judge Mamiya sits on the Consortium Executive Committee. There is an in person meeting of the Executive Committee in the next couple of weeks. Regina will email Judge Mamiya a summary of the issue and he will talk about it with the Executive Board.

Gender and Justice Commission

The Gender and Justice Commission invited Justice Owens and Regina to their meeting earlier today to inform them that they have money available to train interpreters in domestic violence issues. If the Interpreter Commission accepts the money, the Gender and Justice Commission requires there to be training in Eastern and Western Washington.

Justice Owens and Regina are concerned that the training might put interpreters in the role of advocate instead of interpreter.

It was suggested that WITS repeat their three-hour DV workshop which included DV glossaries. The Education Committee will assist with the development of the programs.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be changed to June 16, 2006.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

rmmcd/interpreters/commission/3-10-06 meeting/meeting summary