

COURT INTERPRETER COMMISSION
Puget Sound Skills Center
March 14, 2008

Members Present: Justice Susan Owens, Leticia Camacho, Jeff Hall, Frank Maiocco, Mike McElroy, Judge Ron Mamiya, Steve Muzik, Judge Dennis Yule

Members Absent: Emma Garkavi, Virginia Rockwood, Lourdes Portello Salazar, Theresa Smith

AOC Staff: Katrin Johnson, Karina Pugachenok, Chris Ruhl, Tina Williamson

Guests: Amy Andrews, Claudia A'Zar, Kenneth Barger, Julie Bryan, Ann MacFarlane, Puget Sound Skills Center Students/Staff

GENERAL BUSINESS

Meeting Minutes

A motion was made, seconded and **passed** to approve the January 25, 2008 meeting minutes.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Issues Committee

1) Registered Category - Samoan Interpreter

Initially, the Interpreter Program advertised that the Registry category was available to Samoan interpreters, because Language Testing International (LTI) advertised their ability to administer the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in that language. In 2007, a Samoan interpreter took and passed the written exam, and thereafter it was discovered that LTI no longer tests in Samoan. Therefore, this interpreter was unable to complete the registry process.

After some research, it was discovered that another testing institution (ALTA Language Services), provides language proficiency testing for the Samoan language. ALTA's test scores range from 1-12, and by their own admission, a score of 12 is equivalent to a Superior rating on the OPI (which is required by our program).

In accordance with the recommendation of the Issues Committee, the Commission agreed that the Samoan interpreter should be allowed to take the ALTA test and qualify for the registry if she earns a score of 12. Because this situation is not the fault of the interpreter, this decision is being made specifically to cure this situation only. A memo or document should be filed to detail these events for future reference.

2) Arabic Oral Exam Rescore

An interpreter took the Arabic oral exam in 2007 and passed consecutive and sight translation, and scored 65% in simultaneous. The interpreter made a request that the exam be rescored (a rescore is at the expense of the interpreter). The Issues Committee granted the request. The interpreter also reported concerns about the Arabic oral exam, which staff will pass on to the Consortium Technical Committee.

3) Registered Reciprocity (Limited)

A Serbo-Croatian interpreter moved to Washington from Tennessee. In Tennessee she was a registered court interpreter, and met the same testing requirements as is required here – passed the Consortium written exam with a score of 80% or higher and passed the OPI administered by LTI with a score of Superior.

The Commission decided that this interpreter need not retake the same tests for purposes of obtaining Washington Registry status, provided she meets the remaining registry requirements (attend introductory course and submit to a criminal background check).

4) No Certified Spanish Interpreter - Article

Recently an article was published regarding the work of a Spanish court interpreter. The article made multiple references to the interpreter's regular work in court. The interpreter is not certified. In accordance with the recommendation of the Issues Committee, the Commission decided to send the court a letter of concern regarding its use of a non-certified interpreter.

5) Continuing Education Credit – Glossary Work

A request was made to the Issues Committee for continuing education credit for work done on a Spanish legal glossary. The Committee reviewed the work performed and granted three continuing education credits – the maximum allowable under program policies.

Discipline Committee

Nothing to report. The next deadline for completion of continuing education credits is March 31, 2008. Shortly after the March 31 deadline, the committee will be contacted regarding any interpreters who are still out of compliance.

Judicial and Court Manager Education Committee

Judicial College (January 2008)

Judge James Docter, Mindy Baade and Chris Ruhl presented on interpreter best practices at the Judicial College in Tacoma. Evaluations provided very positive feedback.

Superior Court Administrators Conference and Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA) Conference (April 2008)

There will be a one-hour presentation to court administrators. The hour will include materials and a discussion on the practical guide for court staff, LAP Plans and funding, etc. In addition, a resource table will be staffed at the SCJA Conference.

DMCJA Spring Conference (June 1-4, 2008)

A plenary session (1½ hour) has been scheduled for the 2008 DMCJA conference in Chelan. Judge Mamiya is to be one of the main presenters. A planning meeting has been scheduled to discuss the process and faculty. In addition, a resource table will be staffed at the conference.

Guardians ad Litem (May 2008)

Katrin has been invited to present for 40 minutes at a plenary session at the annual training for Guardians ad Litem.

Fall Conference (October 2008)

This will be a 1½-hour choice session. It was recommended that the presentation given here not repeat, but rather elaborate upon the presentation at the DMCJA Conference.

Minority & Justice Commission Annual Conference (April 2008)

There will be a panel to discuss "Enhancing Language Access in our Justice System." This panel will be a collaboration of six members from WITS, WASCLA and the Interpreter Commission.

Steve reported that he has been receiving invitations from courts on trainings regarding effectively working with interpreters. Steve has forwarded those invitations to WITS.

Interpreter Commission/Pattern Forms Committee

Leticia provided a handout to the group that included "top priority" forms for translation, protocol for translators, and court forms already translated. After much discussion, members stated that it would be helpful to 1) obtain a list of current statutorily mandated forms, and 2) receive input from the SCJA and DMCJA on what forms need to be translated with AOC efforts/funds after all the mandated forms are translated into several top priority languages for Washington State. The Commission members agreed unanimously and supported AOC in its effort to conduct the final review of King County Superior Court forms (in accord with the translation protocol) and post them on AOC's website immediately after the completion of the final review.

TESTING and TRAINING

Introduction to Court Interpreting Class

A class was held on February 29 in the Jury Assembly room at Seattle Municipal Court for the newly certified and registered court interpreters. This was a half-day training on courtroom protocol, interpreter ethics and language resources. Presenters included Judge Ron Mamiya, Martha Cohen, Susana Stettri Sawrey and a panel of certified interpreters.

2008 Written Exam

The next Written Exam is scheduled for May 3 at Bellevue College and Yakima Valley Community College. To date, registration includes 78 certified interpreters and 15 registered interpreters. The deadline to register is March 31.

AOC INTERPRETER PROGRAM

Bench Card

Some changes/edits to the bench card were provided by members; Steve had additional edits and will direct them to Katrin via email. Katrin suggested the card be three-hole punched, formatting will need to be adjusted accordingly to accommodate.

Interpreter Funding

The AOC's legislative request to transfer \$191K for the reimbursement of interpreter expenses from FY08 to FY09 was denied. Therefore, if any of this amount is not spent by June 30, 2008, it will no longer be available to the judicial branch. Any money must be spent for the payment of interpreter expenses.

The Commission supports the AOC's proposal to provide money to the courts that were unsuccessful in applying to be implementation sites. The money would be provided for interpreter services in FY08 contingent upon these courts cooperating by providing data in FY08 and 09. This additional data will be helpful in preparing detailed information for the Legislature in 2009.

Interpreter/LAP Legislation

HB 2176 has passed, however, there is no funding attached. The bill requires all courts to create their own Language Assistance Plan (LAP.) Karina gave an update as to which courts already have their LAP's in place.

State Justice Institute Grant

The Interpreter Program has been awarded a 2008 State Justice Institute (SJI) Technical Assistance Grant to begin cataloguing interpreter "best practices" among the courts and implementing the strategic plan developed in July. Chris reported that John Martin would be on board in late February, early March, to begin work with AOC staff and the Commission.

Term Structure for Commission Members

Since all members' terms will expire in 2008, a succession plan needs to be established with staggered term limits. AOC staff will meet with Justice Owens to make recommendations. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Reciprocity

AOC staff was asked to make edits to the Certified Interpreter Program Policies Manual regarding the Commission's decision to extend reciprocity to Federally Certified Interpreters and Oregon State Certified Court Interpreters. Katrin brought suggested edits. It was recommended that the Issues Committee meet before the next meeting to edit the language further.

Next Meeting

The next Commission meeting is Friday, June 20, from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Seattle Municipal Court.