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| final_logo_pc [Converted] | **Interpreter Commission Meeting**  **September 23, 2022**  Zoom Videoconference  8:30 AM – 12:00 Noon PM |
| **Meeting Minutes** | |

**Members:**

Donna Walker

Jennefer Johnson

Kristi Cruz

Luisa Gracia

Katrin Johnson

Michelle Hunsinger de Enciso

Frankie Peters

Ashley Callan

Judge Lloyd Oaks

Judge Michael Diaz

Naoko Inoue Shatz

Anita Ahumada

Iratxe Cardwell

Diana Noman

Florence Adeyemi

**Liasons:**

Berle Ross

Ernest Covington

**AOC Staff:**

Avery Miller

James Wells

Robert Lichtenberg

Alex Donnici

Cynthia Delostrinos

Dr. Carl McCurley

**Guests:**

Tae Yoon

Shiki Izuka

Chela Fisk

Johannes Voogt

Socorro Villedo

Nancy Leveson

Nicole Pierce

Maria Lucas

Yasemin Alptekin

Chief Justice González

Adrian Arias

Emma Garkavi

Maria Elena Montes De Oca Ricks

Christian Sepulveda

Michael Zheleznyak

Oromo Yoseph Petros

Pablo Sepulveda

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Meeting was called to order at 8:34 AM.

**Welcome and Introductions:**

* Judge Michael Diaz introduced himself as Chair of the Interpreter Commission. Members and Liaisons introduced themselves.

**CHAIR’S REPORT**

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

* The June 3rd, 2022 Meeting Minutes were approved as presented.

**Recognition to Departing Commissioners**

* Chief Justice Gonzalez presented a plaque in recognition to Judge Rajul, who was unable to attend.
* Judge Michael Diaz presented appreciation plaques in recognition of the work done by departing Commission Members Luisa Gracia, Frankie Peters, Francis Adewale, and Katrin Johnson.

**Current Member Reappointments**

* Donna Walker, Naoko Shatz, and Florence Adeyemi were nominated for

re-appointment to the Commission with no objections or concerns.

**New Member Appointments:**

* Jennefer Johnson, nominated to replace Frankie Peters in the DMCA Representative, described her background and interest in working for the Commission.
* Michelle Hunsinger de Enciso discussed her background and interest in the Public Member representative on the Commission.
* Maria Lucas discussed her background and interest in the Spoken Language Interpreter position.
* Iratxe Cardwell discussed her background and interest in the Spoken Language Interpreter position.
* As Judge Diaz is being nominated to the State Court of Appeals, he is no longer eligible for the Superior Court Judicial Representative. Judge Edirin Okoloko has been nominated to replace him. Judge Okoloko was unable to attend this meeting.

**ACTION:** The Commission split into a separate break-out room to discuss the candidates and vote for the nominee for the Spoken Language Representative position. Jennefer Johnson, Michelle Hunsinger de Enciso, Iratxe Cardwell, and Judge Okoloko were selected for nomination for appointment to the Commission by the Supreme Court.

**Expansion of the Commission:**

* Judge Diaz announced the Interpreter and Language Access Commission will be expanding membership, with four open vacancies: a Certified Deaf Interpreter Representative, a Deaf Community Representative, a Translator Representative and an Open Position. The Commission additionally has a vacancy for the Public Defender Representative as it received information from the nominee that they will probably not be able to make a commitment for the length of the appointment term. Judge Diaz requested that people to reach out to Robert Lichtenberg to solicit individuals who would be a good fit for those positions.
* There was discussion of when to onboard those new representatives so as to ensure there isn’t a huge turnover of members on the September 30th term end date currently in place. There was a suggestion that April 1 be the date for the appointment term to begin. This matter was referred to the Bylaws Committee which is working on a new Bylaws draft.

**Ashley Callan announced as Chair of Education Committee**

* Ashley Callan is appointed as the Chair of the Education Committee now that Luisa has stepped down. The focus in next few years will be on training best practices surrounding remote interpreting and to study how this medium affects access to justice using remote interpreters.
* Judicial training is important, but the Committee will also be focusing on getting court staff comfortable with Zoom, new technology features, remote interpreting best practices, and the reimbursement program (LAIRP), etc.

**Announce 2023 Commission Meeting Dates and Times**

* Interpreter Commission 2023 meeting dates were announced.
* The possibility of meeting in person next year at some point was discussed, with a hybrid option and suggestion to potentially make it an all-day meeting to make it worth the time.

**Interpreter Recruitment Report –** Shiki “Natsuya” Izuka

* Cynthia Delostrino introduced Shiki Izuka, a law student from Seattle University who conducted an internship research project for the Commission, to present his work on the current state of Interpreter recruitment and potential strategies to improve it.
* He identified two major issues for why interpreters don’t take court/ legal interpreting: Interpreters don’t get paid well and don’t feel that they’re respected. Some ideas to increase recruitment:
  + Expand/liberalize GR 11.3, which relates to VRI (making it available to all proceedings, including evidentiary ones). During the pandemic, attorneys appeared in court via remote video, so it is unclear why interpreters cannot do the same. He noted that because it is important to see visual cues/ facial expressions, some interpreters do prefer to be in person, but many like the remote appearances option so they don’t have to travel.
  + Revise reciprocity practices to make it easier for out of state interpreters to provide services in our courts.
  + Utilize law students who are bilingual. Create a pipeline from schools to the interpreting profession. Seattle Central College has a few language interpreting courses, so maybe the state can reach out to more schools in the state to provide funding for training for students to become professional interpreters.
* Retention: Mr. Izuka discussed the matter of retaining current interpreters for court jobs. A few suggestions were made:
  + Do an annual survey of court interpreters. Many interpreters have said that judges did not understand how to use them properly and that they weren’t being paid appropriately. An annual survey could help them feel heard and create a baseline to address their concerns.
  + Implement a statewide online scheduling platform for easy scheduling of court interpreters that local courts can use.
  + Free seminars provided from the Interpreter Commission on continuing education topics. Interpreters want more training on using technology/ innovations in those areas.
* Equity: He noted that those who are most impacted by these issues are people of color, immigrants, women, individuals who rely on sign language, etc. Interpreters themselves are often from marginalized communities and are impacted by these language-related inequities themselves. This is a social justice/ racial justice issue as well for those interpreters given their language heritage.

**Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Workgroup Formation**

* The Interpreter Commission is creating an Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Workgroup to determine the focus/ priorities of the Commission for the next two years.
* Members: Ashley Callan, Kristi Cruz, Judge Lloyd Oaks, Luisa Gracia, Jeanne Englert, Donna Walker, and Judge Michael Diaz.
* Some ideas for the workgroup: focus on Interpreter recruiting, ASL Testing, training issues for staff/ judges, expanding to Deaf/Hard of Hearing Communities.

**Bylaws Review and Adoption**

* Interpreter Commission has not previously had formal bylaws. An ad hoc committee was set up to draft them after the matter was referred to the Issues Committee and present to the Commission. The draft was circulated and members noted a few grammatical errors and recommended changing the language in a few places.
  + A few substantive questions were raised: whether to say the Commission ‘sets policy’ for the Courts since WA doesn’t have a unified court system; whether a one-year break between terms of membership is necessary. Wording to be consistent with GR. 11.3.3. Discussion of racial, ethnic, gender diversity lens, and concern of using ‘citizen’ as part of our programs. Discussion of Geographical diversity.
  + Since there are a few substantial questions, the committee will continue to meet to discuss them and finalize the bylaws for approval at the December meeting. Judge Diaz asked members to submit suggestions, critiques and questions by Oct. 14th to Bob, Francis and Frankie.

**Racial Justice Action Follow Up—** Florence Adeyemi, Naoko Shatz, Francis Adewale

* Florence provided update on follow up actions from the Racial Justice Consortium, intersecting with the Strategic Planning Workgroup to set priorities.
* Naoko Shatz indicated 6 action items from the RJC Plan: Cultivating Spaces of Belonging, Child Welfare Dependency, Youth Justice, Sentencing, LFO’s and Re-entry issues.
* Members of the Consortium are meant to pick action items that correspond to their work. Cultivating belonging was suggested as easy place to start, since the Commission works on access to justice. Other types of belonging work can involve making court forms more accessible to non-English speakers, having non-English signs in the courthouse, and sharpening racial and equity awareness.
* Francis discussed putting race equity at the center of our education outreach to judges, court administrators, etc, and encouraged the strategic planning committee to consider the priorities of the RJC in its planning.
* Florence discussed LFO issues and would like to discuss what’s disproportionately affecting language communities. The matter will be placed on the February agenda for discussion.

**Interpreter Program Report—** James Wells

* James presented on the status of the Interpreter Program and will have a more comprehensive report at the December Meeting.
* Announced that the LAIRP has hired Tae Yoon, who will start in a few weeks, from the Snohomish Superior Court Language Services.
* The Interpreter Program has been busy with language access trainings this summer, covering new standards of practice for video interpreting and on core language justice principles (“From Margin to Center”).
* The Program had three interpreter training sessions over the summer for newer interpreters and for older ones looking for continuing education credits.
* Registration is now open for the Interpreter Oral Exam in November in Shoreline, which will be the first one since 2019.
* He is creating additional modules for court interpreter orientation and moving certain trainings online.

**COMMITTEE AND PARTNER REPORTS**

**Issues Committee—** Judge Lloyd Oaks

* The Issues committee is working on many of the issues that were highlighted by Mr. Izuka’s report, including reciprocity and the related issue of state reimbursement of non-credentialed interpreters. No clear recommendation had emerged and the matter was referred back to the committee to prepare a full report before the next meeting.
* Judge Oaks discussed a whistleblower issue involving an interpreter who reported potential attorney misconduct and the need to preserve attorney/client privilege as well as the confidentiality requirements of GR 11.2.
* Provided written recommendation to the Education Committee to review best practices and add online trainings for DMCJA members.
* Dr. Carl McCurley offered to help interpret reports with statistics.

**Education Committee—** Luisa Gracia

* The Fall Judicial Conference took place this week, where the Education Committee hosted two sessions on remote interpreting and new ethics standards
* Committee is considering a standalone ASL training module for the Judicial College as it can’t be covered in the 90 minute session.
* WSBA requested a training in November for family law coordinators on using interpreters.

**Disciplinary Committee**

* Justice Whitener plans to have a Disciplinary Manual complete for review at the December meeting if it is ready.

**Liaisons Reports**

* Berle Ross and Ernest Covington from OHHH shared they were excited to work with the commission and have changed focus a bit with the pandemic to work on trainings re ASL and VRI.

**AOC Staff Report**

* **LAP:** Bob provided a report on work on Language Access Plans. He noted that not every court has a description of their process that the public can understand. He will work with courts on key wording after he gets the third draft back from them. Once the plans are finalized, they will have to be updated annually. New courts in LAIRP are now just required to submit a draft, but the AOC will need someone within AOC to provide guidance on judicial officer and staff training for individual court jurisdictions related to their own language access services. He mentioned that courts should need to keep trying to make individualized court LAPs because one unified statewide LAP template will be hard to create because the language access service processes are different for many courts.
* **Commissioner Manager’s Report:** Bob announced new staff members Avery Miller and Mishani Jack-Gonzalez. There were no other major updates to report.

**Announcements: Next meeting will be via Zoom December 2nd, 2022 at 8:45 AM.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 AM**