

LANGUAGE ACCESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
830 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Wednesday, February 13, 2008
DLIR Conference Rooms #310-313

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Roll Call:

Present:

- Serafin “Jun” Colmenares Executive Director, Office of Language Access, Ex-officio
- Dominic Inocelda Language Access Advisory Council, Chairperson
- Gerald Ohta Language Access Advisory Council, Vice Chair
- Lito Asuncion Language Access Advisory Council Member
- Nāmaka Rawlins Language Access Advisory Council Member
- Dr. Tin Myaing Thein Language Access Advisory Council Member
- Dr. Suzanne Zeng Language Access Advisory Council Member
- Canisius Filibert Language Access Advisory Council Member
- Sr. Earnest Chung Language Access Advisory Council Member

Excused:

- Alohalani Boido Language Access Advisory Council Member
 - Bill Hoshijo Executive Director, Civil Rights Commission, Ex-officio
- (Quorum at 9:50am)

Others Present:

- Frances Lum Department of the Attorney General
- Jeremy Low Research Analyst, Office of Language Access
- Uilani Pauole de Sa Senior Legal Analyst, Office of Language Access
- Khin Hnin Htwe (Ozzie) Guest
- Trevor Graham Guest

3. Approval of minutes of January 8, 2008 Language Access Meeting.

- No discussion regarding minutes. A request to change Monique to Uilani was made. A motion to approve minutes was made by Sr. Earnest, seconded by Mr. Asuncion. Minutes approved unanimously.

4. Executive Director’s Report

- See Attached Report.
- Chairman Inocelda requested to send his “Thanks” to Shari Dela Cuadra for all her work; “she was there at the beginning.”

5. Language Access Conference

- Chairman Inocelda gave the floor to Executive Director Colmenares. The following conference speakers are confirmed:
 - Grace Chung-Becker (keynote speaker)
 - Aryan Rodrigues
 - Susan Shah
 - Robin Bronen
 - Kimo Alameda

Conference Committee still seeking panelists for “Language Access and Use of Technology.” Ms. Zeng further stated if no panelists are found she could request somebody to do a power point presentation. So far, 80% of all speakers confirmed. Executive Director Colmenares mentioned there will be some exhibitors (vendors & non- profits) at the Conference.

Sr. Earnest requested that non-profits shouldn’t have to pay for a display table. Frances Lum reminded the Council Members to make sure there is no appearance of favoritism among vendors. Executive Director Colmenares assured her that all vendors can apply equally.

6. Legislative Initiatives (see attached Bills)

- Executive Director Colmenares gave an update. HB2575 clarifies definitions and increases the Language Access Advisory Council membership. HB2446 requests appropriate funds for a proposed Language Bank. HB2575 HD1 came out of committee which combined the two bills. The portion of the bill that requires covered entities to submit plans to OLA has been deleted. SB2395 is a Senate companion bill for the original HB2575 which was passed by the Senate Committee on Human Services and passed on to the Judiciary committee. Uilani requested that council members and language access supporters should give OLA - as a professional courtesy - advanced notice of any feedback on proposed legislation.
- Sr. Earnest mentioned how the Language Bank may be perceived to wipe out certain non-profit agencies like Pacific Gateway and KKV. Executive Director Colmenares agreed that others misunderstand the establishment of a Language Access Bank and see it as a threat as opposed to a solution to the dearth of qualified and trained interpreters and the lack of coordination among language service providers within the state.

- Ms. Zeng was concerned about the training and testing aspects, felt that the Language bank should not be doing the testing or certification. Executive Director Colmenares responded that the Language Access Bank would coordinate and not actually do the training. He also said that the Bank would establish and maintain a directory of language service providers that state agencies can access when in need of interpreters or translators.
- Council Advisor Member Mr. Canisius also expressed concerned about the Language Bank, pointing out a need for further discussion of the proposal.
- Council Chairman Inocelda stated in defense of OLA, that the Office is under pressure from several quarters to get language access in place fast – and that those who were pushing for fast action are now fighting the bills and concepts because they now feel threatened by the process.
- Council Vice Chair Ohta was concerned about the bills being combined due to technical corrections in one component might not bode well for the rest of the bill. Vice Chair Ohta also suggested a structured way to provide input to alter bills. Executive Director Colmenares responded that LAAC already has established a “Legislative Committee” to handle that process.
- Council Member Mr. Asuncion felt that the bill is written well – Language Bank doesn’t do more than it says and deals with the issues well.
- Executive Director Colmenares requested support from the Advisory Council members, as individuals who represent other agencies as opposed to being members of LAAC.

7. Bilingual Staffing

- Chairman Inocelda directed the floor to Uilani. She is still researching the matter but learned from DHRD that departments are able to recruit bilinguals using the Selective Certification Requirements. Vice-Chair Ohta stated serious personnel issues – need to tie in criteria, and not narrow hiring pool.

8. New Business

- Chairman Inocelda turned the floor to Phil Liu of the Office on Equality and Access to the Courts. Mr. Liu gave an update on the Judiciary’s Language Access Program, and thanked OLA for their support of the OEAC workshops. (see attached handout that was presented in power point)
- Mr. Hoshijo’s Concerns (Email dated 1/24/08)
Executive Director Colmenares referred the group to Mr. Hoshijo’s email dated 1/24/08. He informed the body that Bill Hoshijo was concerned that OLA was telling covered entities that they must submit a language access plan to OLA. He was also concerned about the solicitation made by for-profit entity (UPR) based on this wrong information. Director Colmenares told the group that he already spoke with Bill about this – that OLA has not been doing this and that OLA has met with UPR and has written to covered entities about the incorrect information given by UPR. He

feels that the matter is moot especially since we removed from the bill the provision that covered entities have to submit a language access plan to OLA.

9. Meeting Schedule for 2008

- March meeting has been changed to the 18th of March (third Tuesday) at 9:30am in the Director's Conference Room #321.
- Hawaii's Language Access Conference being held on 28-29th of March will take the place of the LAAC April meeting.

10. Announcements:

- Vice Chair Ohta mentioned another "Laulima" conference is being held in March and should not be confused with our Conference being held on the 28 and 29th of March.
- Ms. Zeng mentioned that the UH Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies will soon be offering additional training courses and requested for everybody's support.
- Executive Director Colmenares announced the AECF (Annie E. Casey Foundation) Language Access Convening has been changed from April 3-5 to April 1-3, 2008. Vice Chair Ohta, Director Colmenares, and two staff from OLA (Uilani and Jeremy) will be attending.

11. Adjournment

- As there were no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.