

National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages

Eighth Annual Conference

April 14th - 17th, 2005

Madison, WI

The 8 th Annual International conference of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) took place between the 14 th and the 17 th of April 2005 at the Doubletree Hotel, Madison, WI. The theme of this year' s conference was "The Year of Languages: Expanding the Presence of Less Commonly Taught Languages." The conference was organized by the National African Language Resource Center and brought together about 200 participants from various countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, United Kingdom and different parts of the United States.

This conference was sponsored by the UW-Madison International Studies and Programs, UW-Madison College of Letters and Science, Anonymous Funds, National African Language Resource Center, NCOLCTL, African Studies Program, Department of African Languages and Literature, Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies, Center for East Asian Studies, Center for South Asia, Language Institute, Center for European Studies, Latin American and Iberian Studies, Global Studies, CIBER & CREECA.

The conference hosted a pre-conference workshop for the UW-Madison Less Commonly Taught Language community and conference participants. The conference also featured 4 plenary sessions, 50 paper presentations, 4 colloquia sessions and 11 poster presentations besides hosting 9 exhibition booths. A computer with internet access was provided for the conference attendees at the exhibition room.

The pre-conference workshop was conducted by Prof. Masakazu Watabe on "Establishing a Realistic and Effective LCT Language Program for Higher Education". The workshop focused on how to establish a language program in the U.S. higher educational institutions with results in mind. Discussion was centered on what kind of language program should we envision and establish before we begin teaching the first year of non-Indo-European language class.

The reception held on the same day featured colorful dance performances staged by the Natyaprana Dance Company. It was inaugurated with classic Bharatanatyam Dances led by Kripa Bhaskaran. They were followed by dances from Arabia, India, Vietnam, the Middle East and Africa. Global unity was emphasized by the last dance which featured all these performers dancing to the tune of Vande Mataram.

The Welcome session on the 15 th of April was chaired by Michael Everson. Speakers included Magdalena Hauner, Sally Magnan, Antonia Schleicher and Gilles Bousquet. The keynote address was delivered by Congressman Rush Holt. The need for foreign language education in the US was emphasized by the Congressman in his talk, titled "An Uncommon Moment for Less Commonly Taught Languages".

There were also four plenary sessions in the conference with eminent speakers from the LCTL field such as Ralph Hines, Richard Brecht, Robert Slater, Audrey Heining-Boynton, Ray Clifford and David Edwards. These sessions focused on topics like Title VI/Fulbright-Hays and Less Commonly Taught Languages, The Course of Human Events and Language Education in the U.S, The National Flagship Language Initiative (NFLI), American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Gaining Esteem in the Academe, and Languages and the National Interests.

Papers were presented in the fields of Research, Material, Curriculum, Teacher Development, Testing and Technology. The delegate assembly meeting was held on the 15 th of April and it was attended by delegates from the constituent organizations of NCOLCTL as well as the NCOLCTL executive board members. The delegate assembly voted to accept MGLTA (Modern Greek Language Teachers Association) as an affiliate member of the NCOLCTL. They also elected Erika Gilson as the at-large representative for the executive board during the meeting.

A dinner was held on the 16 th of April to honor Professor Dora Johnson with the 2005 Ronald. A. Walton Award in recognition of a career of Distinguished Service to the LCTLs. This was followed by an acceptance speech by Dora Johnson in which she shared with the audience, her invaluable experience in the LCTL field stretching over four decades.

The conference was a wonderful forum for the participants to share and communicate ideas on the common cause of promoting the Less Commonly Taught Languages and identifying the various needs in this field.

The NALRC and the NCOLCTL members are very grateful to everyone that contributed to the success of this year' s conference. We look forward to seeing all of you again next year in Madison as we celebrate the ninth annual NCOLCTL conference.