

National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages

Ninth Annual Conference

April 27th - 30th, 2006

Madison, WI

The 9th Annual International Conference of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages was held at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, WI, April 27 – 30, 2006. The theme of this year's conference was "Expanding the LCTL Capacities in the United States." The conference was organized by the NCOLCTL Secretariat, which is housed in the offices of the National African Language Resource Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Nearly 200 LCTL professionals from around the United States, the United Kingdom, and China participated in this year's conference.

Sponsors of this year's conference included the University of Wisconsin-Madison International Studies; the International Institute; the Center for East Asian Studies; the Center for South Asian Studies; the Center for South East Asian Studies; the Department of African Languages and Literature; African Studies Program; the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies—with the generous support of the Ettinger Family Foundation; Global Studies; Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies; the National African Language Resource Center; NCOLCTL; the UW-Madison College of Letters and Science; and the UW Lectures Committee.

On Thursday, April 27, NCOLCTL held a Pre-Conference workshop, sponsored by the UW-Lectures Committee, open to all UW-Madison Less Commonly Taught Language professionals and conference participants. Dr. Margaret Malone, of the Center for Applied Linguistics, delivered this year's pre-conference workshop on "Assessment in Less-Commonly Taught Languages." The workshop consisted of four modules on the vocabulary of assessment, individual classroom needs assessments, assessment resources, and the differences and challenges of assessment facing LCTL classrooms and programs.

That evening, April 27, NCOLCTL held a joint reception with the Wisconsin International Outreach Consortium (WIOC), who were hosting the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays National Outreach Conference. With many members of both conferences in attendance at the reception, the total number of participants neared 300. The attendees were treated to a multimedia performance of skits, music, and dancing by UW-Madison less-commonly taught language classes. The languages represented in the performance included Yoruba, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Tibetan, Tagalog, and Indonesian.

The next morning, April 28, General Welcome Remarks were delivered by Antonia Schleicher, Gilles Bousquet, Magdalena Hauner, and Michael Everson. Immediately following, Gail McGinn, the Department of Defense's Senior Language Authority, delivered the keynote address of the conference, titled, "Expanding LCTL Capabilities in the Department of Defense." Mrs. McGinn also presented NCOLCTL Executive Director, and Immediate Past President, Antonia

Schleicher with the Gold Level Presidential Volunteer Service Award in recognition of all of Dr. Schleicher's efforts in the interests of less-commonly taught languages and cultures.

Five other plenary presentations were also delivered over the course of the conference. Speakers at these sessions included Carl Falsgraf of the Center for Applied Second Language Studies, Robert Slater of the National Security Education Program, Ralph Hines of the International Education Programs Service (Department of Education), Richard Brecht of the Center for Advanced Study of Language, and Paul Sandrock of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language. The topics of these sessions ranged from discussions of the role of federal higher education partnerships, to Title VI/Fulbright-Hays and LCTLs, global literacy for all students, LCTL survival in higher education, and measuring proficiency in critical languages.

Forty-three (43) papers were presented at this year's conference on topics such as curriculum, materials, research, technology, and professional development. Ten (10) colloquia were presented and thirteen (13) exhibitors set up booths representing developers of LCTL materials, resource centers, or various agencies. Additionally, two member organizations of NCOLCTL, the Consortium for the Teaching of Indonesian and Malay (COTIM) and the South Asian Language Teachers Association (SALTA), held their annual meetings during the conference.

On Friday, April 28, a banquet was held in honor of Ray T. Clifford and Leonard Polakiewicz, winners of this year's A. Ronald Walton Award, which recognizes distinguished service in the field of LCTLs. Both recipients delivered acceptance speeches in which they illuminated the processes by which they had served the LCTL community in the past and in what direction they see the LCTL community moving in the future.

The NCOLCTL conference remains a substantial forum for the sharing of successes and problems in the field of LCTLs. Many attendees expressed enthusiasm for being able to derive collective solutions to common problems in the teaching of such languages.

The staff of the NCOLCTL Secretariat are grateful to the many people who contributed so much of their time and energy into making this year's conference a success. We would especially like to thank the volunteers who gave their time at the registration table, as session chairs, as performers, etc. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year for the 10 th annual conference.