



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS**  
*COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS*

Pullman Meeting Minutes  
April 27, 2007

**Roll Call:**

Commissioners present: Ruben Baca, Víctor Chacón, Ninfa Gutiérrez, Yvonne López-Morton, Félix Negrón, Rosalba Pitkin, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, and Gabriel Portugal

Commissioners Absent: Ty Cordova and Jorge R. Chacon (excused)

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez and Alicia Luna

Meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM

Chair Lopez-Morton acknowledged Paul Sturm, Pullman School District Superintendent and WSU for the use of their conference facilities.

In addition, she introduced the panel: Susana Reyes, Pullman School District Assistant Superintendent; Paul Sturm, Pullman School District Superintendent; Ted Weatherly, Pullman Chief of Police; and Francis Benjamin, Councilmember representing the Mayor's Office.

Introduction of CHA members, CHA Staff and Meg Jones from the Governor's office were also made.

Chair Morton-Lopez presented a Power Point presentation on the Commission's priorities within our Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Chacon made a presentation on Education that included:

- Latino drop-out rates
- Graduation rates
- Percentage of LEP's
- The growing trend of the biracial population and
- Whitman county statistics for 2003-2004

He also went over 2008 measures which included:

- Parental Involvement
- Drop out rates
- Improving Latino WASL scores and

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- The alarming Public 4 year institution graduation rates

Commissioner Portillo Salazar made a presentation on Justice and Equity that included:

- 30 to 60 gangs in Seattle
- 106 gang related incidents in 2006
- High number of Hispanics involved in gangs

**Paul Sturm**, Superintendent of Pullman School District shared the following information regarding his school district:

- Very diverse with 50 different languages that enrich students, faculty, and student experiences
- Very difficult to provide adequate services due to the size of their school district
- Strong primary language skills, however, the young learn very fast
- Demographics are changing and it is very challenging

**Francis Benjamin**, Councilperson representing the Mayor shared the following:

- Grade schools have 24-25% non-English speaking students
- Police and Fire response have issues with limited English residents
- WSU's demographics; the driver is spikes in the building/construction arena and who the workers are

**Ted Weatherly**, Chief of Police shared the following:

- He has been Chief of Police since 1979
- Worked with gang issues in Santa Ana, CA during the 60's and 70's
- Pullman is a gang free community with no identified gangs
- Occasional problems with Hispanic issue do creep up in Pullman
- Pullman is a very highly educated community
- Several Social agencies that help and support Pullman residents
- Violence is a worldwide issue that is promoted by rap music
- Grassroots organizations need to step up to the plate and address violence
- Recommended ways to intervene is through activities, jobs, stability of child's education, etc.

Commissioners Negrón asked Chief Weatherly how diverse was his force.

Police force per Chief Weatherly is:

- 1 African American
- 2 Asians
- 1 Female
- 0 Hispanics

**Susana Reyes**, Assistant Superintendent shared the following:

- Student population in the Pullman School District is at 2100 students
- 110 are Hispanic students spread out evenly
- 50 ESL Students (includes all languages) – Some have very little education and language skills; funds are limited
- Parent Involvement includes support staff, family activities, etc.
- Franklin Elementary has dinners and potlucks that include parents
- Alternative program; credit retrieval to skill development

- School Improvement Plan for students who have not passed a portion of the WASL
- Ratio for free and reduced program is 25% with 34% being the highest

Commissioner Baca said that as a community Pullman seems to be a model community. Are there any issues that need to be addressed?

The response was that recent race based incidents have had an impact on the community but the community will not tolerate racist actions/behaviors. Another issue was Graffiti and White Power which originated from a group from Centralia.

Public Comments included the following:

Miguel Saldaña, a WSU student with a Bachelors and Masters who is pursuing his Doctorate offered the following comments regarding his experience at WSU:

- Very rare to see Latinos pursuing a field in Mathematics; factors of why they pursue or don't pursue this field is lack of role models such as teachers, lack of parent involvement and or educational background of parents
- More than 90% of parents did not finish high school
- Lack of academic knowledge or how the US school system works
- His thesis is "Parent Involvement in School" which will include how students view school and how they view teachers and administrators

Commissioner Pitkin asked Mr. Saldaña for ideas on how to motivate parents and other kids to continue school

Mr. Saldaña's response was by having role models and mentors available to middle school students and for adults as well.

David Brookbank from Spokane offered the following comments:

- Spokane needs to get the Cuban community engaged
- There is no gang issue so forget it and focus on engagement
- Spokane is a community with no leadership; some of the community leaders don't speak the language
- CHA needs to meet with DSHS, Social Security, DOL and L&I and start addressing issues
- Problems with Interpretation in Spokane; white racist community and cultural differences
- 14,000-18,000 of Spokane's population is trapped in a racist environment
- Suggested that we get a meeting place where the roof is lower so that the interpreter doesn't have issues with hearing what is said

Chair Morton Lopez advised Mr. Brookbank that a community assessment forum was being held on May 17<sup>th</sup> to identify if there were "interpreter" issues in Spokane.

Mr. Brookbank was concerned whether the forum would be open to the public or not.

Vanessa Martinez, WSU Doctoral Student offered the following comments:

- Mentorship program for students is needed
- Are the faculty and teachers culturally competent?

- More Exposure to other Latinos or other people of color is needed
- Cash Conference is held at WSU for Undergraduate Latino students
- Asked Commissioner Chacón if he was willing to collaborate with WSU on retention and completion research
- Anti-Immigration issue at WSU surfaced during the Day of the Dead celebration

Mirna Diaz Navarette from Spokane offered the following comments:

- Unaware of CHA's function and would like to know what we do
- More support is needed from CHA
- Wanted to know what CHA is doing to unite all Hispanics

Esther Maus from Spokane offered the following comments:

- Court, police, etc are in need of interpreters
- Need mentors to get community people engaged
- Domestic Violence is an issue
- Bullying in School is alarming
- Much isolation in the Spokane community due to lack of English skills

CHA Official business commenced at 8:45PM

Commissioner Baca made a motion to approve the February 23<sup>rd</sup> Olympia public meeting minutes; Commissioner Portillo-Salazar seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor; the motion carried.

Commissioner Portillo-Salazar asked that the Commission evaluate/assess the public meeting process.

Commissioner Baca asked that 2.40.50.30 of the CHA Administrative Policies be corrected because it contained an incomplete sentence.

Commissioner Chacón asked that CHA consider having a future public meeting in Spokane in 2008 due to the perceived discrimination issue.

Commissioner Lopez-Morton made a motion to amend the study session agenda; Commissioner Baca seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor; the motion carried.

Commissioner Portugal made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Negrón seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor; the motion carried.