



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Commission on Hispanic Affairs Community Meeting

Cheney, WA

May 17, 2013

6 pm to 9 pm

Meeting called to order at 6:10 pm

Roll Call:

Commissioners present: Manuel Reta, Nora Coronado, Rosalba Pitkin, Andres Mantilla, Sharonne Navas, Gloria Ochoa, and Lillian Ortiz-Self

Commissioners absent: Ty Cordova, Cynthia de Victoria, Anita Ahumada, Frank Lemos

Staff present: Marena Lear, Uriel Iñiguez

Introductions:

Commissioners:

- Manuel Reta - representing Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish specializing in Immigration
- Nora Coronado - representing King County, specializing in health
- Rosalba Pitkin - representing Vancouver Washington, specializing in higher education
- Andres Mantilla - representing King County, specializing in economic development and land use
- Sharonne Navas - representing King County, specializing in education
- Chair Lillian Ortiz-Self - representing Snohomish County, specializing in education and mental health
- Gloria Ochoa - representing Spokane County, specializing in law

Panelists:

- Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University
- Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College
- Shelly Redinger, School District 81 Superintendent
- Mary Jo Buckingham, Director of Special Programs for Central Valley School District



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Commissioner Gloria Ochoa gave special acknowledgments to Professor Gilroy who was instrumental in getting the facilities ready for the meeting. She also gave a special thanks to District 81 for getting families to attend the meeting, and acknowledged special guests in the audience from District 81, including Dr. Irene Gonzalez, the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Services; Bonnie Disharm, Coordinator of Student Services for District 81; Wendy Watson, Secondary Curricular Director for District 81; Gabriel Chavez Garcia, Achievement Gap Specialist for District 81; Ramon Alvarez, Support and Conciliation Manager for District 81; and Joe Lyn Super and Chris Beaker from the Department of Agriculture.

Agenda Review:

Chair Ortiz-Self acknowledged the staff of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs and gave a special thanks to Executive Assistant Marena Lear and Director Uriel Iñiguez. In addition, she explained the format of the meeting and reviewed the agenda.

Commission on Hispanic Affairs Official Business

Motion to accept last month's meeting minutes made by Commissioner Andres Mantilla and seconded by Commissioner Rosalba Pitkin.

Discussion: Commissioner Gloria Ochoa abstained from voting because did not attend the meeting.

Commission on Hispanic Affairs presentation on demographics:

Director Uriel Iñiguez and Commissioner Gloria Ochoa presented a PowerPoint with local statistics and information about the Commission.

Director Uriel Iñiguez conveys that the Commission on Hispanic Affairs was formed in 1971 due in part by the Farmworker Movement led by Cesar Chavez. Washington State decided that the Latino community needed more representation in State government. Although there is a large influx of Latinos, education has remained an issue concerning the Latino community. As a Commission, their duties include identifying key issues, advising the Governor and State agencies regarding these issues, advising Legislators, and establishing and maintaining relationships. The Commission has 11 Commissioners but only two are from Eastern Washington. Graduation rates in some areas are at a mere 50 percent which is a source of concern. With the help of the Gates Foundation, the Commission was able to gather the resources necessary to conduct research on Latinos and education. By collecting this information they have merit to argue that education is a key issue for the Latino community. When reviewing graduation and dropout rates, it is important to question the accuracy of the data, he goes on to say that in order to ensure accuracy the Commission conducted research with the help of a school



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

district that graciously volunteered. They were particularly interested in looking at coding. Coding is important because when the Commission recommends policy to legislators they ensure that everyone is operating under the same set of rules. Research also showed that there is a disconnect between parents and school districts. Parents were unaware of what was going on in their school district. Through the Gates Foundation they were able to provide parents with training on how to become more involved and aware of events occurring in their local school districts. Over 200 parents participated in the training. The vision of the Commission is to create advocates for children. In addition to providing research the Commission has a statewide radio program conducted in Spanish. Eleven State agencies are currently participating in the hopes of reaching out to the Latino community. The Commission also has ties to the Health Disparities Committee (Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities) through Commissioner Nora Coronado who sits on that committee. In addition, the Commission was instrumental in changing the definition of the term "education" to reflect diversity. They were also instrumental in creating an Oversight Achievement Committee, and with the help of several legislators, they were successful in passing a bill that prohibits discrimination in schools. As a Commission, they have managed to increase the number of community meetings we have each year. In previous years community attendance was very poor but the Commission has strived to work with local leaders to improve attendance. Franklin and Adams counties have the highest percentage of Latinos, which makes them minority majority counties.

Commissioner Gloria Ochoa points out that this is the first meeting held in Spokane in 10 years. She decided to highlight education in this meeting because it is a high priority for the Commission. There is a Caucasian majority in Spokane County with minorities making up only about 10 to 11 percent of the population. Within that 10 to 11 percent, Latinos are the largest and fastest growing minority. Hence, Central Valley and Spokane School Districts have the largest percentage of Latino students yet have the lowest enrollment rates in Community Colleges in Spokane County.

Chair Ortiz-Self called upon the panelists to address the efforts being made to close the achievement gap and decrease dropout rates.

Panelist Remarks

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

Eastern Washington University has one of the strongest Chicano Studies Program in the State and while the data indicates that they have about 1,300 students, the actual population count comes closer to about 1,500 students. Eastern, as a percentage, has the highest enrollment figures of Latino students because the University does not only look at grades and SAT scores when reviewing college applications. President Arévalo described that admission counselor's look at a



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

student as a whole and their participation in the community and at home. Eastern's methods of recruitment are unique in that they make home visits to meet parents and family members of prospective students. Home visits are important so that parents understand what role they need to play in their child's college career in order for them to be successful. Many universities utilize the Camp Program which is funded by the Federal Government. Eastern also utilizes the program but they fund it themselves. In addition to the Camp Program, Eastern has a program called the Dream Academy for students who have a greater potential of continuing their education at a higher level. They also have a summer program that prepares students who enroll at Eastern. Their Chicano Education program is a great access point for potential students. Every year they bring roughly 300 students to campus for a Cinco de Mayo celebration where prospective students have the ability to interact with other students and faculty. Their recruitment process is not limited to students in high school but is also extended to students in community college. Another successful program that they recently started was the Dual Admissions Program. This program allows students who are enrolled in a Community College to be simultaneously enrolled at Eastern. Furthermore, they have degree programs available all over the state which makes Eastern not just a regional university but a state-wide university.

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College

Cynthia Vigil recently saw a Spokane Community College statistic which showed that out of approximately 9,000 students only about 559 of them identified as Hispanic. Having recently attended a summit, she had the opportunity to interact with students who dropped out of school. This group consisted of African American, Native American, and Latino students. Throughout her interactions with these students, they explained that they were tired of being placed into racial categories.

In regards to closing the achievement gap, community colleges have multicultural offices and Latino clubs. The clubs on campus are exceedingly active and tend to be very inclusive. Another way in which Spokane Community College is working to close the achievement gap is through the Achieving the Dream Grant in partnership with the Gates Foundation. Through this program all students have mandatory advising and if a student ends the quarter with a 2.0 or lower they are automatically put on probation. Statistically they have solid numbers of Latinos enrolling into school but graduation rates seem to be at an all-time low. Studies show that if a student can connect to at least one person on campus their likelihood of success increases dramatically so they try to advise them and help them foster these kinds of relationships to ensure their success. Vigil is a member of the Hispanic Business Professional Association. This organization works with community colleges to host a local Hispanic graduation ceremony and a young scholar recognition ceremony. This year the association recognized 50 young scholars between 7th and 11th grade who maintained a 3.0 or higher GPA and recognized 50 graduates at both the high school and college level. The Hispanic Business Professional Association also hosts a fundraiser



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

for student scholarships. This year they raised roughly \$10,000 for student scholarships. Another concern that faces students in institutes of higher education is lack of structure and income. Many students go to a university and struggle to make ends meet which affects their academic performance. Vigil encourages students to move back home and attend a community college so they can focus on their academics. Another concern facing undocumented students is residency. House Bill 1079 allows undocumented students to pay in state tuition however, if a student moves to a different state upon graduating from high school they lose their residency in Washington. When the student comes back to go to college they are forced to pay international tuition fees. This issue is something that she has brought up to the state board and a think tank at the University of Washington but was unable to gain any support to change this unfair clause.

Shelley Redinger, School District 81 Superintendent

On time graduation rates in Spokane public schools has been on the rise, although they have hit a flat rate in recent years. Latino student graduation rates have been continuing to rise but it is not enough. The school district is working to improve the graduation rate to about 90 percent or higher. A big focus area for her school district is college and career readiness. They recently hired Wendy Watson to help execute college and career readiness. Her school district is actively recruiting Latino students to join AVID, a career and college readiness strategy. Through these advertisements students become more aware that college is a strong possibility for them. They have also allocated funds and directed them towards specialty programs that start at the elementary school level. The school district recently hosted a career fair in one of the elementary schools where there was a first grader who was visibly upset. When the principle asked her what was wrong she expressed that she was too poor to go to college. The principle then guided her through all of the booths and explained that there were scholarships available to make college a feasible option for her. They are also encouraging students of color to enroll in more AP classes. In addition, they received an Equal Opportunities Schools Grant to assist in closing the achievement gap. Her school district is also looking to implement a dual language program in addition to hiring an achievement gap interventionist to work towards closing the achievement gap in their high schools. She is also exploring implementing an alternative to out of school suspension. She plans to use Lewis and Clark High School as the pilot school to run the program. Suspensions are higher among specific racial groups and this is a cause for concern.

Mary Jo Buckingham, Director of Special Programs for Central Valley School District

A few years ago Director Buckingham met with the community and had about 40 different focus groups provide insight on how Central Valley School District was performing. As a result of this community meeting they developed a strategic plan and came up with 11 initiatives. One of those initiatives was providing a report to their community and creating transparency that they made available to everyone via their website. The Latino population in Central Valley is small



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

but it is slowly expanding. Much of this growth is due to an influx in families who are from South America here on political and/or religious asylum. These families make up a large part of the English language development program. Along with transparency, education became a key initiative. The curriculum that the district uses is available in Spanish as well as in English through an online database. While not all students and parents have access to a computer, schools have made sure that they can gain access to the database at school. As part of their strategic plan, they created the proactive intervention team, which is comprised of six action teams, to foster relationships with students and parents through engagement. Director Buckingham has also worked to expand the programs they currently have. For example, they extended their summer session program which has even generated a wait list. She invites the Commission to help in providing translation services for parents, specifically for parent – teacher conferences and providing trainings for parents to help them become more engaged in their child’s education.

Public Comments

Jackie Von, Student from Eastern Washington University and MECHA member

The statistics presented here today seem hypocritical. Jackie graduated from North Central High School and throughout her high school career she and other students of color felt excluded and discriminated against. What is the Spokane School District going to do to make students of color feel more welcomed and accepted?

Maria Gains, local community member

Maria is concerned with the help being offered to undocumented students in gaining access to higher education. She would also like to know what kind of help and support is being offered to children of parents that have been detained.

Mariana Garcia and Mimi Nuñez, MECHA members

Mariana and Mimi have several concerns with the Chicano Education Program at Eastern. Many Latino students, including MECHA members, feel as though they are not being properly served by the Chicano Education Program on campus. They feel as though the Chicano Education Program should work closely with the University’s Admissions and Financial Aid Offices to ensure that all undocumented students are being properly served. They believe that the Chicano Education Program is understaffed and in need of more staff members who can make themselves available to students at all times. In addition, the Chicano Education Program can improve their relationship with Latino students at EWU by finding ways to better support undocumented students and reaching out to more Latino students via email to encourage them to participate in



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

events. They would also like to see more panels and forums to interact with faculty about some of our concerns.

Gabriel Chavez Garcia, Spokane Public Schools staff member at Rogers High School

Gabriel explains that there are only about 40 students at Rogers High School that speak Spanish yet they refrain from speaking their native language because they are timid and uncomfortable. Implementing dual language programs for these students would be extremely beneficial. In addition he believes that school counselors should be trained in giving support to undocumented students. On several occasions parents and students have approached him and he has become the students advocate but the responsibility should lie on school counselors.

Claudine Richardson, graduate student at Gonzaga University

Claudine expresses that the AVID program that is implemented in Spokane High Schools does not look to engage or assist students who are having difficulties in the classroom. Instead the program seeks out students who are already performing at a high level in order to make the program appear more appealing. She suggests creating bench marks in order to ensure the programs success. For example, she explains, if a student starts the program with a 2.8 GPA, teachers need to reevaluate the students' status a year later to verify that they are improving.

Dr. Martin Garcia, Assistant Professor at the Chicano Education Program

Dr. Garcia stated that the President at Eastern has been supportive and helpful to the Chicano Education Program. However, he is concerned that the program is not performing to its full potential. Dr. Garcia would like to see the Chicano Education Program continue its legacy of effectiveness and continue improving.

Questions/comments from the Commissioners for the Panel

Chair Lillian Ortiz-Self

Chair Ortiz–Self expressed that there was a comment made on the need for ongoing cultural competency training for staff and asked how they would incorporate that need into their strategic plan in each of their institutions?

Mary Jo Buckingham, Director of Special Programs for the Central Valley School District

Director Buckingham states that every new teacher must attend a 4 - hour diversity training in addition to providing a number of book studies in cultural relevancy. They are aware that this is



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

not enough but explains that they are constantly looking for new ways to improve their staff's cultural competency.

Shelley Redinger, School District 81 Superintendent

Superintendent Redinger points out that similar to Mary Jo, they also have training for new teachers as well as GLAD, Guided Language Acquisition Design, training although it is more instructional. In addition to GLAD training their district also provides ACE, Adverse Childhood Experience, trainings.

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

President Arévalo explains that part of their strategic plan is providing trainings in cultural diversity and fostering diversity on campus. Every new employee at Eastern is required to attend a cultural diversity work shop. In addition they have an advisory meeting on diversity where they evaluate and analyze activities that occur on campus as well as recommending cultural programs.

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College

Cynthia Vigil expresses that they have district wide diversity committees, campus wide committees, and an intercultural week. She goes on to explain that it is important to ensure that these trainings and committees are genuine in instructing professors about cultural competency. A student can be turned off by a professor's lack of cultural awareness so it is important to note that real change will occur when professors and teachers become more culturally aware.

Commissioner Gloria Pitkin

Commissioner Pitkin states that her question is directed toward Dr. Arévalo and asks; With the recent budget deficit and funding cuts what priority is being given to ensure that the heart of the recruiting students to Eastern remains vital and strong?

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

President Arévalo conveys that their main priority is to ensure that they fund teaching, which is the core mission at Eastern. Unfortunately, over the last three years, the University has lost roughly 47% of its funding which makes it difficult to continue funding for these programs.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Commissioner Manuel Reta

Commissioner Reta indicates that the word Chicano has been used a number of times and asks why the word Chicano is being used instead of Latino or Hispanic?

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College replied

Cynthia Vigil explains that the use of the word Chicano is an ongoing conversation she has had for many years. She tends to use the word Hispanic or Spanish speaking in an attempt to be more inclusive.

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

President Arévalo explains that he uses the term Chicano because that is the name of the program. In addition, the word Chicano is widely accepted because it is a political term. People who are politically aware of the struggles that Latinos face are more inclined to use the word Chicano to convey their interest and commitment in the Chicano Movement.

Shelley Redinger, School District 81 Superintendent

Superintendent Redinger expressed that this is a very sensitive issue but within the Spokane public school system they tend to use the word Hispanic.

Mary Jo Buckingham, Director of Special Programs for Central Valley School District

Director Buckingham states that she also uses the term Hispanic or Latino. She confesses that she has not heard the term Chicano used to describe the Latino community in a long time.

Commissioner Sharonne Navas

Commissioner Navas asked the panel; what adult education programs they offer to Latino families?

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College

Cynthia Vigil states that they have a program called the Institute for Extended Learning which offers Spanish speakers classes on citizenship, obtaining driver's licenses, and alike.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

President Arévalo expressed that Eastern does not have any specific programs for Hispanic/Latino families. He continues on to say that the only program that incorporates Latino families is the Head Start Program.

Commissioner Nora Coronado

Commissioner Coronado's question is in regards to the STEM program. What does the STEM program look like for Latinos, how do you market the program to Latinos, more specifically to Latinas?

Shelley Redinger, Superintendent School District 81

Superintendent Redinger explains that the STEM program is a big focus for the State of Washington. The State of Washington has the largest potential for high paying STEM jobs than any other state. Her district has received grants to assist students who normally would not have the opportunity to participate. At Lewis and Clark High School they are focused on engineering and recruiting students who are underrepresented in advanced placement classes.

Chair Lillian Ortiz-Self

Chair Ortiz-Self expressed that offering the PSAT in 10th grade allows students to take classes in 11th and 12th grades; classes that colleges and universities would like students to be taking in 9th grade. She asked what measures are being taken to identify these students in 8th grade to allow them more time to take these classes in high school?

Shelley Redinger, Superintendent School District 81

Superintendent Redinger explains that they have required all students to have an email account because they have found that when students have access to email the school is able to gather more data and expose them to more pre-testing. All students in 8th grade take the Ready Step test to gather information and enter it into the system.

Commissioner Rosalba Pitkin

Commissioner Pitkin asks the panel if they have any specific programs for Dream Act students to gain access to community colleges or universities?



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College

Cynthia Vigil explained that through the Hispanic Business Professional Association, they gave out a \$750 scholarship to an undocumented student but because the amount was too low, the student opted out of going to school. Furthermore, she explains that Spokane Falls Community College gives out hundreds of dollars in scholarships, regrettably however, they are not able to allocate funds to undocumented students because they do not have a social security number. She points out that this policy needs to be changed in order to guarantee that all students have access to college.

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

President Arévalo explains that the Chicano Education Program has become instrumental in recruiting and providing scholarships to undocumented students. Through the University's donation fund they are able to provide scholarships to undocumented students. They also make great use out of their website in order to provide as much information as possible to all students, in particular to undocumented students.

Commissioner Andres Mantilla

Commissioner Mantilla asks; how closely do you work with different industry sectors for job readiness to ensure that the curriculum is being tailored to the needs of the industry? How are you marketing to potential students who come into those programs and how are you measuring success?

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College

Cynthia Vigil explains that many of the professional technical programs at Spokane Community College are run by advisory boards. These boards are made up of actual professionals who help tailor their programs to mirror actual work environments. The Spokane Falls Community College website provides students with a rough estimate of what their salary would be for their chosen career. They also hold events through outreach marketing to help get as much information out to their students and parents as possible.

Commissioner Andres Mantilla

Commissioner Mantilla asked; aside from the technical standpoint, how are they integrating basic work ethics into their programs for career readiness in general?



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Cynthia Vigil, Spokane Falls Community College

Cynthia Vigil described that they have college preparatory programs for individuals who have their GED or adult basic education program to prepare them for college at a very basic level. This basic level includes reading, writing and math courses.

Dr. Rodolfo Arévalo, President of Eastern Washington University

President Arévalo stated that community colleges take the lead in work force development and work with the Chamber of Commerce. Spokane School Districts works closely with the Chamber of Commerce to help prepare students and provide them insight on the job market.

Chair Lillian Ortiz-Self

Chair Ortiz -Self knows that AVID is not the answer to everything, but she happens to be a big supporter the program because she has seen the research and has seen what it can do for children. Her question to the panelists was who they are letting into these programs to ensure the fidelity of the program?

Mary Jo Buckingham, Director of Special Programs for Central Valley School District

Director Buckingham explained that over the last five years her district has focused on training their staff to become experts in the AVID program and has personally completed the two year AVID director's program. The district would also like to implement the AVID program at a much younger age and are looking to expand the program to incorporate students at the elementary school level.

Shelley Redinger, School District 81 Superintendent

Superintendent Redinger expressed that her district has been carefully monitoring the AVID program. Data and research shows that a few of their middle schools have generated the most success. Most of their high schools in the Spokane School District need improvement and are continuously monitoring the data to ensure that success.

Commissioner Andres Mantilla

Commissioner Mantilla indicated that there was a question raised about certified translators and interpreters and asked if the panel could address how school districts, specifically high schools, plan to incorporate these services?



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Mary Jo Buckingham, Director of Special Programs for Central Valley School District

Director Buckingham expressed that they have tried to incorporate many different methods of translation. Most recently they have used a translation conference call service. In the past her district had a program called Parents Helping Parents which was successful and popular but had to discontinue the program due to lack of funding. She wants to ensure that every parent is able to overcome the language barrier and become engaged in their children's education.

Shelley Redinger, School District 81 Superintendent

Superintendent Redinger expressed that her district has hired bilingual specialists to assist teachers and to provide translation services during parent - teacher conferences. In addition they are constantly working toward providing translators for every language that is spoken in their school district.

In Closing

Chair Lillian Ortiz-Self

Chair Ortiz-Self explained that there are several school districts that provide Spanish translation services for native Spanish speakers and will work to ensure that the local Commissioner has that information available to share with the community. In addition, she expressed that the Commission has been working with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project and other organizations to help inform people of the deferred action policy. The Commission works diligently on policies and advising legislators on the key issues that Latino's face across the State of Washington. Chair Ortiz-Self thanked the panel members for engaging in an open dialogue and providing information on all of the services that are being provided to the Latino Community. She urged the community to contact their local Commissioner Gloria Ochoa for any follow up questions or concerns.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Andres Mantilla and seconded by Commissioner Gloria Pitkin.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.