

Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting minutes
3/28/07
Indiana Government Center South
Conference Room 17

Commissioners Present:

Alfonso Vidal (Chair)
Frances Vega (Vice Chair)
Carolin Requiz (Treasurer)
Marisa Aguilar
Juana Watson
Dr. Mary Ilu Altman
Hon. Rep. Mara Candelaria-Reardon
Proxy Lawrence McCormack
Sid Norton
Pr. Samuel Ruiz
Hon. Judge Gregory Kellam Scott
Angel Velez
Proxy Virgil Madden

Commissioners Not Present:

Myrna Maldonado
Adolfo Solis
Hon. Rep. Richard McClain
Hon. Sen. Frank Mrvan
Rita Cano
Hon. Sen. Thomas Wyss
Proxy Joshua Richardson

Staff Present:

Amy Mendoza, Executive Director

I. Call to Order

A quorum that consisted of 11 commissioners was established. Chair Alfonso Vidal welcomed those in attendance and asked guest speaker John Clark to bring his presentation.

II. Guest Speaker Presentation

John Clark of the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research (SIPR) introduced himself as senior research fellow at Sagamore. He also introduced his fellow research consultants, Courtney Burkey and Alberto Hernandez.

Mr. Clark explained that Sagamore Institute has undergone some changes; there is a new president, Deborah Daniels, and a new Indiana focus. The Institute is currently working

on a new project regarding the impact of Latinos in higher education. The project is made possible by a grant from the Lumina Foundation. The project is divided into 3 major sections over a 1-month period. The study is intended for the Lumina Foundation and will be using Indiana to understand trends in education, civil society and the business community. The Institute will release details about the first draft on June 13, 2007 and workforce trends and analysis will be reviewed. The study will also include an economic analysis. Areas like the workforce, higher education and children of immigrants will be researched.

The second part of the report will be released in October. Different regions of the state will be reviewed and the study will focus on informal, non profit, non organized efforts in place to provide tutoring, special services, etc.

Study will look at immigrants broadly and study both documented and undocumented immigrants.

The final draft of the 3 part report will be released in Mach 2008.

Institutions will be reviewed, specifically their efforts in serving immigrant students.

Mr. Clark mentioned that Sagamore would like to be of assistance to the commission and offered to assist with any issues that the commission is wrestling with.

Vice Chair Frances Vega asked Mr. Clark if Sagamore has already partnered with agencies. Mr. Clark answered that Sagamore is looking for partners and is currently working with Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Center for Urban and Multicultural Education. He mentioned that he is also currently seeking other “think tanks” as partners, for many reasons. Current partners on this project include individuals working on the DREAM Act, like representatives from the National Society of Hispanic MBAs. Mr. Clark mentioned that he is looking for more partners like this.

Vice Chair Frances Vega recommended contacting someone with the 21st Century Scholars Program and mentioned an issue that was taking place with application procedures. Mr. Clark mentioned that he is in need of contacts there.

Chair Vidal asked Mr. Clark if he was asking commissioners to issue recommendations. Mr. Clark answered that he wanted to know where the commission was heading in terms of research. He offered that Sagamore could help tailor their research towards the commission’s goals. He mentioned that he would like to be of service to the commission.

Director Mendoza thanked Mr. Clark for his support and mentioned that she would send the commission’s strategic plan to highlight the commission’s goals in research. She mentioned that the commission’s education committee will be looking into several areas regarding higher education and said the committee could benefit from Sagamore’s support.

Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman mentioned that a major challenge is the DREAM Act., which is a federal issue. She said that most leaders in the state are looking for some kind of strategy. She asked how Sagamore plans to convince legislators of the benefits of the bill.

Mr. Clark emphasized the need to produce research.

Commissioner Altman mentioned that many Latino students are already lost when they enter high school and recommended that Sagamore also look at middle and elementary level students.

Mr. Clark concurred with Commissioner Altman's recommendation and mentioned that the study also looks at 6-8 grade level students.

Commissioner Altman mentioned remittances and that it would be a great idea to include part of the research in demystifying remittances.

Mr. Clark mentioned that remittances were covered in a previous report, Connecting Mexico and the Hoosier Heartland.

Commissioner Altman stressed the need to review income and influence foreign policy.

Mr. Clark mentioned forming linkages between different countries and influencing policy continues to be a focus. He mentioned the organization "Provocate." He made reference to Mayor Bart Peterson's Business Mission Trip to Mexico and the Friends of Calnali program as an example of innovative ideas to link countries at the local level.

Commissioner Juana Watson: explained that Mr. Clark's comment focused on her work with liking her village with the US and vice versa.

Mr. Clark also mentioned the Indiana University (IU) - Kenya program, in which doctors from IU Medical Schools travel to Kenya.

Commission Secretary Marisa Aguilar mentioned that the Dept. of Education (DOE) has a focus on graduation rates. She offered to research this division and provide contact information. She also informed Mr. Clark that IU recently published a study about Latinos and higher education; she offered to provide information. She recommended looking on the State Commission on Higher Education

Mr. Clark reiterated the timelines of the report: June 13, 2007 for the workforce analysis portion, October 12, 2007 for the children of undocumented immigrants portion and March 21, 2008 for the portion on adult education and institutions serving immigrant populations.

Commission Chair Vidal welcomed a partnership with Sagamore and directed further contact with Director Mendoza. He also mentioned that if commissioners have any questions, Director Mendoza can be the contact person for this.

Director Mendoza explained the commission's goals that arose out of the strategic plan. She mentioned that one of the priority areas is education, with respect to adult education and higher education. She stressed that there are goals in the commission's strategic plan that are in line with the goals of the Lumina study. She thanked Mr. Clark and mentioned that the commission would be glad to utilize the expertise and resources that Mr. Clark brings. She mentioned that once the commission writes its committee reports, it will be important to highlight and support Sagamore's work.

Mr. Clark mentioned that he would include commissioners on Sagamore's list serve. He mentioned that next Tuesday he will be hosting an expert on the Swedish immigration system. He also mentioned a screening on Wednesday of a documentary on the interface between immigrants and the medical system. A panel discussion will follow.

Commission Chair Vidal thanked guest speaker Mr. Clark.

III. Commission Business

A. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Vidal asked commissioners to review the minutes of the last commission meeting held on 1-31-07. A motion was made by Vice Chair Vega and seconded by Commissioner Angel Velez to accept the minutes of the 1-31-07 commission meeting. Motion carried by all in attendance.

B. Voting on Health and Tax Committee Reports

Executive Director Mendoza presented the Commission's Tax and Health Committee reports for commissioners to review. She mentioned that there a few grammatical editing adjustments that need to be made to the reports. She reminded commissioners that, at a previous commission meeting, it was decided that the commission submit separate committee reports, instead of one that included all the committees, because only 4 committees met during the year, and areas of research were unique. She also mentioned that the executive committee met earlier during the day and recommended submitting administrative report of the commission's progress in other areas in 2006. The committee recommended that this report should be sent electronically to commissioners for review and submitted to the Governor and legislature within a short timeframe.

Vice Chair Vega mentioned that the executive committee recommended to check with the Governor's Office to see if there is a preferred deadline to receive such a report.

Commissioner Altman requested that Director Mendoza mail all commissioners a nice copy of the final report with changes. Director Mendoza informed commissioners that she would do so.

Chairman Vidal asked for additional comments to the commission's Health and Tax Committee Reports.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Vega and seconded by Commissioner Samuel Ruiz to accept the Health and Tax Committee reports with appropriate changes. Motion carried by all commissioners in attendance.

Director Mendoza informed commissioners that the final reports will be sent to the Governor and legislature. She also mentioned that she would be working on doing an administrative report for 2006. She also mentioned that the Education and Gang Issues Reports should be ready by the next Commission meeting. She mentioned that the reduction in staff contributed to the delay in these two reports. She also mentioned that the Executive Committee met and discussed sending this report to the Governor's Office for review. She mentioned that she would contact the Governor's Office on timelines.

C. Voting on 2007 Work Plan

Director Mendoza referred to the work plan which outlines the goals of the commission that were produced at the retreat. She then explained that the Commission Chair reviewed the goals and added input. She explained that she is currently working on taking these goals and inserting them in a strategic plan format. She explained that the goals would remain the same, and additional recommendations would be attached on the strategic plan on how to achieve the goals. She mentioned that she would email commissioners the strategic plan.

Commission Chair Vidal mentioned that the goals are very broad. He also mentioned that the Committee Chairs should have a good understanding of what the goals are and they are expected to not only lead the efforts of the committee but also review the goals and make any additions necessary. He referred to important goals that were assigned from the Governor and those are priority items. He thanked those commissioners that accepted the task of chairing committees. He mentioned that he is working on filling remaining vacancies for committee chairs. He encouraged committee chairs to continuously contact Director Mendoza and/or members of the executive committee with any questions.

Commission Treasurer Requiz recommended that the driver's license and immigration goals be incorporated under the legislative committee. She mentioned that the report that was done on this issue was very well done and extensive, and the legislative committee could do follow-up.

Commission Chair Vidal concurred that was a good recommendation and mentioned that the work plan along with the strategic plan is a living document.

Vice Chair Vega mentioned that on the pink sheet that outlines the committees and committee chairs, Commissioner Carolin Requiz has agreed to chair the health and conference committees and also serve as the treasurer. She mentioned that these are large responsibilities. She encouraged that it could be an option for other commissioners to join on to chair committees. This could also include commissioners serving as interim chairs until a permanent chair is appointed.

Commissioner Samuel Ruiz mentioned that he would like to be a member of the Civil Rights/Housing Committee.

Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman mentioned that it is helpful to see what the Governor would like the Commission to study and asked if Commissioner Juana Watson could approach the Governor to see what the priorities are in education and health.

Commissioner Watson mentioned that she is appointed to represent Columbus, not the Governor on the Commission. She mentioned that Alfonso is the Governor's appointee.

Commissioner Altman recommended that Commissioner Vidal contact the Governor regarding priorities in education and health.

Commissioner Requiz mentioned that one priority health is insurance for the uninsured. She mentioned that her agency is also focused on rural areas in terms of insurance.

Commission Chair Vidal welcomed new Commissioner State Representative Mara Candelaria Reardon and Commissioner Requiz congratulated her on being the first Latina elected to the office of State Representative.

D. Review of Proposal from the Latino Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

Director Mendoza presented the proposal from the Latino Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence. She explained that the request is for sponsoring the 2nd Annual Conference against Domestic and Violence. She mentioned that last year the commission voted to sponsor the conference at the level of \$1000.00. She pointed out the goals and content of the conference and explained that the coalition is the first of its kind. Last year was the first year for the conference. She explained that usual procedure calls for a review of the proposal and vote at the next commission meeting. She mentioned that the treasurer has a brief report and will give the commission an idea of how much funding is available.

Commissioner Altman asked how many attended the conference last year. Director Mendoza mentioned that 250 attended (as seen in the cover letter). Commissioner Altman recommended asking for a tentative agenda. She also recommended that the commission wait to vote on the proposal at the next commission meeting. Commission Chair Vidal and other commissioners agreed with this recommendation.

E. Hispanic/Latino Community Day at the Statehouse

Director Mendoza explained that the commission partnered in hosting this event last year, and it was very successful. It was a day where Latino students from Indiana high schools came to the Statehouse along with their parents to learn about the legislative process and meet with legislators. Keynote speakers included Juana Watson, Frances Vega and others. She mentioned that the commission also contributed financially last year, but this is not the case for this year. She referred further explanation to Lawrence McCormack of the Indiana House of Representatives.

Lawrence McCormack that the original goal of the program was to increase the number of Latino pages in the house. He explained that teachers recommend students to attend. He mentioned that last year there were about 150 kids. He invited commissioners to come speak with the students for this year. He explained that the house has already raised additional funds for lunch. The date for Hispanic/Latino Student Day is April 25, 2007. He explained that the commission could also assist by acting as the fiscal agent of the event.

Director Mendoza explained that the commission could do this with the commission's special account. She mentioned that in March the Office of the Lt. Governor hosted a farewell lunch for former Consul General Sergio Aguilera and the commission partnered by acting as the fiscal agent. She explained that it was a matter of paperwork.

Lawrence McCormack explained that the event is all day, and the schedule is flexible enough that commissioners can stop by any time during the day to speak.

Director Mendoza explained that originally, a commission regional meeting was to be held on the same day, but this has been rescheduled.

Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman expressed interest to serve as a speaker.

Commissioner Watson recommended that Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon speak at the event. She mentioned that Rep. Reardon would be a great role model for the students. She also recommended Rep. Mike Murphy.

A motion was made by Commission Treasurer Carolin Requiz and seconded by Commissioner Samuel Ruiz for the commission to partner in hosting the Hispanic/Latino Student Day. Motion carried by all in attendance.

F. Hispanic/Latino National Conferences

Director Mendoza pointed out the 3 documents included in the commissioner's packets.

The first is an agenda from the National Hispanic Summit, which Commission Chair Vidal attended previously, and there other documents were outlines from the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and the National Conference of La Raza (NCLR) Conference.

Commission Vice Chair stated that it appears that the NALEO and NCLR conferences were non-partisan and asked Director Mendoza regarding the Hispanic Summit.

Director Mendoza answered that she was not entirely certain, but it seems that it may be a republican focused conference, and she made reference to a similar Hispanic Summit held by democrat senators and congressmen.

Commissioner Watson mentioned that it appears that NCLR is supposed to be a non-partisan agency but it appears democrat-focused.

Commission Chair Vidal mentioned that the Hispanic Summit is supposed to be non-partisan and made reference to the fact that organizers and other leaders in various sectors are invited to attend.

Commissioner Mary Ilu Altman recommended that the commission send commissioners who had not attended previously to attend the conferences. She stressed that every commissioner should have the opportunity to attend these important national events.

Commission Chair Vidal recommended that those who had not attended previously have first choice.

Commissioner Watson mentioned that the attendees to the Hispanic Leadership Summit are nominated by Senators and Congressmen.

Commissioner Mara Candelaria-Reardon mentioned that it is important that the commission provide opportunity for professional development and stressed that the Director be provided with that opportunity. She mentioned that she would support Executive Director Mendoza at a minimum attending these conferences for professional development.

Commission Chair Vidal agreed with her recommendation.

Commission Vice Chair Vega mentioned that she attended out of pocket last year and plans on attending this year. She mentioned that commissioners that attend conferences out of pocket should still be able to represent the commission. She mentioned that she attended the US Hispanic Leadership Institute Conference in Chicago this past month with Director Mendoza as well. She mentioned that Director Mendoza should also be included in these opportunities.

She then presented information on the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Annual Conference that will be held in Orlando, Florida on June 28 – 30. The theme of the conference is the Latino Political Convention. Director Mendoza explained that last year she presented at the conference and it was a great training opportunity.

She also pointed out the information on the National Council of La Raza Annual Conference.

Executive Director mentioned the delay in reimbursement on travel expenses. She asked then if commissioners will submit their names for attendance to these conferences. She mentioned that last year the commission sent a commissioner to each conference and the Executive Director.

Commission Vice Chair Vega asked if a vote would be necessary on travel to the conferences.

Director Mendoza recommended a vote.

Commissioner Mara Candelaria-Reardon made a motion to send 2 commission members plus the Executive Director to the upcoming national conferences. Commission Vice Chair Vega seconded the motion. Motion carried by all in attendance.

Commission Vice Chair Vega pointed out time constraints with the upcoming conferences in June and July.

Commission Chair Vidal asked commission members who would attend.

After discussion, he recommended that commissioners send their requests to attend the conferences to Director Mendoza. He mentioned then it will be decided which commissioners would attend based on those submissions.

IV. Reports

A. Chair's Report

Commission Chair Vidal provided a verbal report: He encouraged commissioners to approach him with any questions. He mentioned that in January the new executive committee was formed and the committee has since then met to discuss the direction of the commission. He mentioned that he has spent time over the past two months reflecting on the direction of the commission. He mentioned that the work plan outlines the goals of the retreat. He reported that the executive committee met again this morning and was very productive. He mentioned that the conference is taking a very important priority this year. He mentioned that Commission Treasurer Carolin Requiz has offered to lead the conference steering committee and mentioned that she would be contacting commissioners for assistance on this effort. He stressed that the directives from Governor Daniels are extremely important. He stressed that the commission needs to show results on these directives. He mentioned that new committees are the performance measures committee and the legislative committee. He mentioned that the legislative committee is key to monitor what is going on at the federal, state and local levels. He mentioned that the rest of the committees are going to be continuations of previous committees. He explained that the shuffling around of leadership is beneficial to the commission.

B. Treasurer's Report

Commission Treasurer Requiz gave a verbal report and mentioned that she along with the chair have met with Director Mendoza to look at the status of the funds. She mentioned that the Commission's allocation for the next 2 years will be decided during the current session. She mentioned that there currently are not enough funds to hire another full time staff person, so an hourly will be hired instead.

Commissioner Gregory Kellam Scott mentioned that commissioners need to “step up to the plate” in asking key legislators for more funding. He mentioned that it should be a priority. He made reference to the fact that previous employees of the commission did much work and were not properly compensated.

C. Executive Director’s Report

Director Mendoza presented her Executive Director’s Report and mentioned that the commission has lost 2 staff members. She explained that in addition to maintaining the work flow of the office she has spend much time on the work and strategic plans, committees, and the 200 committee reports. She also mentioned that she met with other State commission Directors at the US Hispanic Leadership Institute in Chicago, IL and presented information on the commission’s work and 2007 directives. She mentioned that Commission Vice Chair Frances Vega attended and contributed to the discussion. She explained that other states commended the commission for its work and events such as the Legislative Dinner. The State Directors also met with representatives of the US Census Bureau to communicate issues with the upcoming 2010 Census.

Commission Vice Chair Vega mentioned that the commission was applauded by the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. The budget proposal that was presented to the Governor, Ted Strickland, was based on information provided by Director Mendoza. Currently the Governor is in support of the proposal, which is roughly a \$1 million budget. She explained that the budget still needs to go through the legislative process.

D. Regional & State Agency Reports

Commission Chair Vidal asked if there were any regional or state agency reports. Commission Treasurer Requiz mentioned that Minority Health Month is in April and there will be an Opening Ceremony on April 7th at 9:00am.

Commissioner Kellam Scott mentioned that on April 16th, the Civil Rights Commission will have a Holocaust Observance at the Rotunda. All are invited to attend. He also mentioned that he along with Director Mendoza have had discussion on doing a joint program on minority community discussions. He mentioned that this is something to pursue for next year.

E. Statewide Conference Report

Commission Treasurer Carolin Requiz provided a verbal report on the statewide conference. She mentioned that she is working on finalizing the conference date (in September or October) and will send it to commissioners as soon as possible. She also mentioned that the conference speakers are being recruited and the conference content is being developed. She mentioned that the main focus of the conference will be hot issues facing Latinos, including education , immigration, etc.

V. Old Business

A. Election of Commission Secretary

Director Mendoza explained that, after some research, it was discovered that Proxy Christine Cde Baca was unable to serve as commission secretary due to her proxy status.

Director Mendoza called for nominations for commission Secretary.

A nomination was made for Commissioner Marisa Aguilar to serve as Commission Secretary. No further nominations were submitted at that time.

Commissioners displayed a show of hands and the majority of the members voted for Commissioner Marisa Aguilar to serve as commission secretary.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:35pm.