

During the 2008 RID Region V Conference in Sacramento California, this was one of the motions that was heard and passed.

Motion C08:02

We move to amend the RID Region V Conference communication policy to reflect the organization's philosophy of diversity and inclusion by using direct communication in our shared language of ASL.

Loriel Dutton/LeeElle Tullis-PASSED

Rationale:

- 1. To create an environment that demonstrates respect and access via a common language.*
- 2. To promote a bilingual philosophy of communication within our region.*
- 3. To encourage fiscal responsibility by using monies towards greater member benefit (eg. Onsite testing, registration/travel stipend, larger facilities, etc).*
- 4. To foster greater collaboration between RID and the Deaf Community to create a space for dialog.*
- 5. Increase exposure to and use of academic ASL.*
- 6. To decrease communication via a 3rd party.*
- 7. To enhance the use and comprehension of ASL discourse among the membership.*
- 8. To engender a heightened interest from Deaf leaders, consumers, linguists, professionals, interpreters, teachers, and researchers, to feel more welcome in sharing their knowledge base with the membership.*

This “communication policy” will be in effect for the RID Region V 2010 Conference in Salt Lake City. With the RID Board of Directors’ decision to use ASL through the entirety of the 2009 Conference, the Region V Representative, the 2010 Conference Co-Chairs, and the Region V Presidents Council have decided to clarify how the motion will be put into place.

We will accomplish this with three goals in mind:

- 1) Provide educational opportunities in our shared language of ASL, affording direct communication amongst conference participants.
- 2) Provide networking opportunities in our shared language of ASL, affording direct communication amongst conference participants.
- 3) Provide association related business opportunities in our shared language of ASL, affording direct communication amongst conference participants.

To accomplish these goals, we will provide entertainment that is visual in nature, and uses our shared language of ASL. The Membership Meeting (formerly known as the business meeting) will be conducted in ASL. And, the Program Selection Committee will work on soliciting high quality workshops and presentations with more presenters

offering educational opportunities in our shared language of ASL than in any past Region V conference.

You might then ask, what definition are we using for “ASL”? We are referring to ASL as the language used by D/deaf people throughout the United States that naturally contains a wide range of variation and dialects- from language that is highly visual/space-reliant, to language which is highly linear-reliant. Individuals can reference <http://www.nad.org/issues/american-sign-language> for more information on this philosophy.

Now, for those interested, a little background. The intention of the motion is inclusion. Historically, RID conferences have been held with most presenters choosing to share their knowledge via spoken English. Likewise, entertainment, keynotes, business meetings have all traditionally been conducted in spoken English. By doing so, colleagues who are D/deaf are made to access all information via an interpreter/transliterator. As we all know, interpretations/transliterations, regardless of the skill of the interpreter/transliterator are products of filtered communication. No interpretation/transliteration is perfect, and we have consistently put some of our colleagues at a disadvantage by relying on an interpreted/transliterated message, as opposed to receiving direct communication and education from the actual source.

RID promotes a diverse environment and profession, and states such through the RID Diversity Statement.

RID Diversity Statement:

To actively foster an inclusive environment in which the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) embraces diversity as an integral part of the association. RID is committed to establishing and maintaining a diverse, accessible, civil and supportive environment that adheres to RID's philosophy, mission and goals. RID is committed to providing growth opportunities that allow members to reach their full potential and maximize member value. RID pledges to seek partners who share our philosophy and commitment to upholding high standards of diversity within the association.

We understand that increasing inclusion for others will at times be perceived as limiting inclusion or participation for others. We understand that when we attempt to provide equal access, that at times we can swing too far in the opposite direction. Knowing this, the Conference Co-Chairs, the Presidents Council, and the Region V Representative are attempting to promote a conference that supports everyone in accessing conference events and activities.

We recognize that this approach to conference inclusivity proves to be both an amazing challenge and benefit to interpreting and transliterating students. While challenging for a student to access information through academic ASL, this proves a wonderful opportunity to study and observe language, communication, use of register and many other linguistic components that are requisite to understand and use in order to be a competent interpreter/transliterator. We encourage students to approach this conference with a willingness to fumble through in order to learn. Our field has a rich tradition of

understanding that through immersion in seemingly uncomfortable situations where we often miss information, is birthed the interpreter who really gets what this field is all about.

We also understand that individuals have varied learning styles, and that some do not access information as easily through their second language. We understand that this is a valid point, and that there are no easy answers. We will encourage presenters to remember that their audience will be a compilation of both hearing and deaf individuals and to present in a way that allows individuals to maximize their learning, while doing so through direct communication.

This all said, the conference will also ensure that events such as the PMGD (Philosophy, Mission, Goal, and Diversity Statements) forum, the work of the SCBRTF (The Strategic Challenges and Bylaws Review Task Force), and the Membership Meeting will be accessible through English, either through voiced interpretation (likely closed-circuit through an FM) or through captioning services. There will also be a system in place that will assist individuals in determining which presentations will be most accessible for their individual needs.

We ask for everyone's support in this. Some of the most important things we can do are not the easiest things we can do. But by doing them and living up to our commitments, they eventually become part of our nature- part of who we truly are.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Webb, RID Region V Representative
Holly Nelson & Jennifer Harvey, Region V 2010 Conference Co-Chairs
Region V Presidents Council