

## Student Outreach Project Report

The Student Outreach Project is very pleased to announce that the NAJIT Board of Directors has increased the stipend to be awarded to NAJIT Scholars for next year's conference. Up to six Scholars will be chosen, and each will receive a stipend of \$500 in addition to a free conference registration.

This year, NAJIT's Scholars represented five different translation and interpreting educational institutions. They were chosen by a panel of three judges nominated by this committee and approved by the Board of Directors. The application and selection process was coordinated by Amy Free, Scholarship Coordinator, and supervised by the SOP Chair. The translation and interpreting students selected in this year's contest were:

Darlene Phillips, Miami Dade College  
 Kristina Zakaryan, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
 Amy Griffin-Otterberg, La Guardia Community College  
 Ting Guo, University of Massachusetts-Amherst  
 Nancy Leveson, Bellevue Community College

The students served this year as NAJIT Scholars at the 27th Annual Conference in Houston, Texas and received commemorative plaques. Articles by two of the Scholars appear on pp. 18 and 20 of this issue.

Information about the upcoming 2007 NAJIT Scholar Program will be available in October 2006. In addition, the Student Outreach Project is pleased to be collaborating with SSTI in establishing the Mirta Vidal Scholarship Program and partnering with the NAJIT Mentoring Project.

Vanesa Ieraci, Chair

## NAJIT and Other Organizations

The following letter was sent to the Co-Chairs of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care.

May 16, 2006

Ms. Wilma Alvarado-Little and Ms. Maria Michalczyk  
 Co-Chairs, National Council on Interpreting in Health Care

Dear Ms. Alvarado-Little and Ms. Michalczyk:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Board of Directors of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, which is an organizational member of the NCIHC, has endorsed the NCIHC National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care. We will provide copies of these standards to all attendees at our forthcoming annual conference. We appreciate Ms. Carola Green's willingness to give a presentation on them at our conference. Thank you for all the careful work that has gone into preparing and publishing these standards.

NAJIT recognizes and values the fact that legal and medical interpreting are different fields with somewhat differing expectations. We would like to mention for the possible interest of your board and members a few observations

that have occurred to us in reviewing the Standards of Practice, as given in the enclosed comments. We hope that these will be of value to you and to NCIHC members as you continue to help develop the field of medical interpreting in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Sincerely yours,  
 Alexander Rainof, Ph.D.  
 Chair, Board of Directors

### Additional Comments on the Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care, from the Perspective of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators endorses the Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care. In addition, we would like to suggest the following comments:

#### 1. Sight Translation

We believe that sight translations should be conducted only in the presence of a doctor, nurse, or other person authorized to read a medical document to a patient. In addition, however, there is another aspect of sight translation that interpreters and healthcare providers should take into account: since documents sometimes have difficult terminology and legal ramifications, specific training and skills may be necessary to render an accurate sight translation of complicated documents. The interpreter and provider should make sure that any interpreter who undertakes sight translation possesses the required skills and is fully capable of performing this activity. If the material is too difficult or complex for an on-the-spot sight translation, it may be necessary for the document to be translated and presented in written form (which can be read by the interpreter to the patient), or for an interpreter with specific qualifications in medical translation to be sought.

#### 2. Advocacy

We believe that it is essential that medical interpreters serving in workman's compensation cases or in any medical setting where there are legal implications remain neutral at all times and refrain from any advocacy activity. If the interpreter is unaware of this limitation of his/her role in a setting that has legal implications, the interpreter is put at risk and could leave himself or herself, as well as the healthcare provider, exposed to legal challenges.

#### 3. Cultural information

We believe that when serving in any medical setting where there are legal ramifications, the interpreter must remain neutral at all times and refrain from providing cultural advice or advice of any kind. Cultural advice should only be provided by (a) anthropologists with specialized training and knowledge of the particular country and region from which the non-English or limited-English speaker originates, or by (b) interpreters who have been qualified and hired specifically as cultural experts. Interpreters working in a field where an individual's health, safety and life are at stake should be made aware of these requirements and the limitations on providing cultural information. If the interpreter is unaware of such requirements and/or limitations, the interpreter could put the LEP patient at risk or put him/herself at risk of exposure to legal challenges.

May 16, 2006

NAJIT exhibited at the California Health Care Interpreters Association conference held June 2-3 in Los Angeles, California. ▲