



## Paul Ruppert, Business and the Language Flagship

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso, CLTA Executive Director

On May 7, The UC Consortium on Language Teaching and Learning, in coordination with LARC and other world language groups, hosted a Language Summit, prior to creating a Language Roadmap for California. One of the highlights of the day was an address by Paul Ruppert, of Global Point View - Mobile Industry Consulting.

Before sharing his remarks with you, let me explain the Language Flagship Program, because this is what he champions. The Language Flagship, sponsored by NSEP (the National Security Language Program, an extension of the Department of Defense), is a "ground-breaking national educational initiative producing global professionals who have superior levels of language proficiency along with a degree in a subject area such as engineering, biology, international relations or business." The Flagship has programs at college campuses with the end of turning out very, very advanced students in strategic language. Ruppert's group is the Flagship Group, linked to the NSEP programs but a private non-profit (501c3) working to promote language study in the U.S. The Flagship had more than 1,300 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs in December 2009. Since its inception in 2004, there have been more than 600 students graduating from a Flagship program. For further information, go to the Flagship web site at [www.TheLanguageFlagship.org](http://www.TheLanguageFlagship.org).

According to Mr. Ruppert, the Flagship movement creates a three-point triangle, engaging Business, Education and Government to "address the dearth of strategic language skills in America's culture." He asks a pointed question: "Should Americans even consider themselves economically secure if they can't have

commercial dialogues in languages beyond English?" Ruppert cited President Obama's proposal to expand US trade by 50% over the next 5 years. But this will only be possible if the US business sector has access to individuals with stronger foreign language skills.

According to the European Commission in a 2006 report, 56% of EU citizens speak one language in addition to their maternal language, 28% speak at least two foreign languages, and 11% speak at least three. Only 9% of American citizens speak a language in addition to English, while only 8% of college students currently are studying a second language.

Ruppert believes that "Feeble foreign language and cultural skills translate into a competitive economic disadvantage for the US." International business and global markets have changed since the last generation, and we Americans need to adapt or we will pay the price "commercially, economically and geopolitically."

Mr. Ruppert has a 13-year-old son. He believes that his best legacy for him, "as for all our children, is to prepare them for the poly-phonic, multi-cultural world that we live in already."

Speaking as a business executive, Mr. Ruppert advises us to consider the "Value Proposition surrounding the need for developing foreign language skills in the US." There are six components to this proposition:

- **Market:** Whom you want to influence;
- **Value Experience:** the benefits you will gain;
- **Offerings:** the services that California's Language Roadmap will offer that you can leverage, for example, to recruit business support;
- **Benefits:** What positively accrues from your efforts;

Continued on page 2

- **Alternatives:** competitive issues, and **Differentiation:** how your efforts differ from the status quo;
- **Proof:** Substantiate how the effort will help you profit.

These concepts will help us in building a “polyphonic, multi-cultural workforce. This is vital, if we are to succeed and be economically secure.

The Language Roadmap Committee is fortunate to have Mr. Ruppert helping us. His view of the union of business and language and culture education is truly refreshing and gives us hope for the future—if we accept the challenge to make languages a vital part of every student’s education.

## AB 2446: the Furutani Bill Continues to Progress and Jeopardize our Graduation Requirement

By Lorraine D’Ambruoso, CLTA Executive Director

AB 2446 is a bill that if passed, will enable students to substitute career/technical education courses for the World Language and/or Visual and Performing Arts high school graduation requirement. I am certain that CLTA’s membership has been following the progression of this bill, unavoidable with all of the alerts that our webmaster has distributed with the organization’s pleas that its members contact their legislators.

CLTA has asked that Assemblyman Furutani amend the bill to provide that at least one of the two electives that students select must be in World Language or the arts. To date, he has not adhered to this request. Over the past year, the second version of this bill (there was another last year that went into suspense) has passed the Assembly and Senate Education Committees, and has been referred to the Appropriations Committee since there is a cost burden associated with the bill. CLTA has many reasons for opposing this bill, but I will cite one because it actually addresses the topic of career preparedness. We support a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century work force. World languages and cultures are a 21<sup>st</sup> century career asset that is desperately needed in numerous job fields across the state. California is one of the **world’s** ten largest economies. Exports from California businesses to other nations represent 25% of our state’s \$1.5 trillion economy. We desperately need multilingual/multicultural individuals to assume careers in our state; any legislation encouraging students to discount World Language study is not serving the needs of these students, the businesses for whom they will work and certainly not their constituents. Should our students be able to opt out of World Language courses, they will lose the knowledge and cultural understanding that comes from what NCLB recognizes as a core subject and from what our economy desperately needs not only to compete, but to thrive in the world marketplace. Rather than opposing us, proponents of career / tech education should be embracing the World Language education community and the critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that it provides to our students!

When the Senate Education Committee met, the vote was as follows:

Alquist – yes	Huff – yes	Emmerson – yes
Hancock – yes	Liu – yes	Price – abstained
Romero – no	Simitian – abstained	
Wyland – absent		

Please take the time within the remainder of the summer to personally contact your senator and request a *no* vote on AB 2446. Share with them how disappointed you were with those who voted for the bill, since they do not appear to understand the benefits of a multilingual/multicultural California citizenry. If he or she abstained, offer to talk with him about the importance of world languages and culture for today’s global society and arm him or her with the powerful arguments needed to intelligently discuss the measure when it come up for a vote in the Senate floor. Should you need assistance in framing your arguments regarding the value of World Language education in today’s global society, the publication *Learning World Languages and Cultures in California: A Stimulus for Academic and Economic Success* can be downloaded from:

[http://www.stanford.edu/group/CFLP/Stanford\\_CFLP\\_Handbook\\_1117091.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/group/CFLP/Stanford_CFLP_Handbook_1117091.pdf)

There is still time for you to act. The bill is waiting to be considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Furutani states that the bill has no fiscal implications. But the Senate analysis suggests that this is not so. That means we must continue to contact our respective senators, because they will still have the opportunity to say *yea* or *nay*. If they are members of the Appropriations Committee, they will have an opportunity to vote there as well as when the bill goes up for a vote in the full Senate.

We must let our Sacramento representatives know that we deeply believe in the goal of **100% prepared** students, as set forth by Public Advocates, who are supporting us on this issue. All students should be prepared to make an informed choice and be eligible for both college and career pathways when they graduate from high school.

Thank you for your letters, visits and e-mails. They matter. Your voice matters. This URL will assist you to find and communicate directly with your Senator: <http://www.legislature.ca.gov/cgi-bin/memberinfo>

# A Review of the 2010 Legislative Day at JNCL

By Lorraine D'Ambruoso

Once again this year, I represented CLTA at the annual JNCL - NCLIS (Joint National Committee on Languages and National Council for Languages and International Studies) Assembly. This is a three-day meeting of delegates from all of the language associations throughout the nation. The first day is always a legislative day, with a briefing on Capitol Hill followed by Congressional visits.

Dan Davidson, JNCL President, welcomed us and reminded us that foreign languages are not for an elite, but for every child in America. He went on to state that in addition to the inherent value of learning another language and culture, language learning enhances American competitiveness and work force readiness and encourages globalization, an international process in which America is a participant.

J. David Edwards, JNCL-NCLIS Executive Director, then addressed us on the goals for the day on the Hill. I should add an explanation here. JNCL's function is to unify the profession while NCLIS' function is to produce language policy. Delegates attend as lobbyists with "special, public, national interests, language and culture education. Mr. Edwards reminded us that we had three responsibilities during our visits:

- to "make the case" for languages by sharing evidence of our successes;
- to lobby on behalf of specific legislation; and
- to offer ourselves as resources.

Edwards reminded us that we have seen much success. Progress has been made in establishing long, articulated sequences of learning that are finally delivering 3 and 3+ levels of speakers by age 22. Foreign language is now recognized as a part of a world-class education, listed as a core subject in NCLB, behind Math, Science and Language Arts. But despite this, our discipline is threatened by the reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), which will replace NCLB. Why? Because President Obama's and Arne Duncan's "Blueprint for Reform" proposes to consolidate funding for a multiplicity of subjects into one pot for the states to administer - much in the way that block grants function. Where would that leave us? Dead last, from past experience.

In Washington, bills must be authorized and then funding must be appropriated. At this time, ESEA has not yet been re-authorized, but still has appropriations remaining from its last authorization. The plan is to reauthorize by October—if this does not happen, then it will not happen until 2011. It proposes to appropriate \$265 million for the consolidated subjects to share, according to states' decisions. For us, the only dedicated stream of funding for K-12 language programs is for FLAP (Foreign Language Assistance Program) grants.

There are currently four FLAP grants operating in California, with a funding level of almost \$3 million dollars. Should the consolidation take effect, we could lose these programs.

So our mandate on our Congressional visits was threefold:

- Ask for an increase in funding for the programs that we already have: FLAP / Title VI, and the International Education and Foreign Language piece of HEA (Higher Education Act);
- Request co-sponsors for Rush Holt's (D-NJ) H.R. 4065 for Learning Partnerships in Foreign Language Programs; and
- Request that Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education support maintaining FLAP with dedicated funding.

Once we had our goals for our visits, New Jersey's Democratic Representative Rush Holt treated us to a special visit. Congressman Holt holds a PhD in Physics and is a five-time Jeopardy winner! But, with the deaths of Paul Simon and Ted Kennedy and with the looming departure of Connecticut's Christopher Dodd, he is also our only remaining ally on the Hill. He helped write the College Cost Reduction Act, which gives students of Math, Science and Foreign Languages up to \$16,000.00 for their college costs, provided they teach for five years after receiving their degrees. He is also the author of the College Loan Forgiveness Act, which has been authorized but not yet funded.

Congressman Holt echoed Paul Simon's contention that "Americans are linguistically mal-nourished." According to the last census, only 44% of our high school students are in foreign language classes and only 34% of our elementary schools even offer foreign language programs. These programs are historically "last in, first out" - something that we are seeing as I write. And only 9% of Americans can speak a second language.

He has authored HR 4065, which would amend the ESEA of 1965 to establish a partnership program in foreign languages. The Secretary of Education would have the authority to make incentive payments to eligible partnerships to "develop and maintain model programs that support articulated language learning in kindergarten through grade 12." Funds could also be used to provide opportunities for students to experience maximum language exposure in dual-language immersion programs, for scholarships for study-abroad opportunities, activities that encourage whole school and community involvement, effective and innovative use of technology, and alternative certification programs.

Continued on back page

# CLTA News

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Continued from page 3

Holt concluded by stating that the ESEA will be dramatically reworked to contain little of NCLB and to include HR 4065. His dream is an America where "every school offers an array of languages and cultures which are integrated into the entire curriculum."

Our second speaker was Representative George Miller's (R-CA) aide, Denise Forté. She believes that ESEA is "about what we want to do to raise student success, to create a challenging and rigorous learning environment for each student." Forté said that Congressman Miller was one of the original authors of NCLB and is interested in what worked, what didn't and what solutions might exist." Since the National Research Council states that a workforce proficient in other languages is going to be a requirement in the years to come, she believes that early language learning is going to be the key to establishing a pipeline of proficient speakers of languages other than English. Since

NCLB has narrowed the curriculum, ESEA recognizes that foreign language and literacy share a strong relationship, and this will be taken into account as it is reworked.

After a long morning, we headed out for our Congressional visits. Richard Anderson of Salinas, CA, representing the International Language and Culture Foundation, accompanied me. We did get a commitment from Representative Sam Farr's (D - CA) office to sign on as a co-sponsor for the Holt bill. But aside from that success, we did not end the day with much hope. The economy is bad, and funding for all programs is being slashed. However, we tried our best to explain our position on language and culture as essential components for a well-rounded education. That is all we can do, except return to California and continue to work here at home, since that is where most policy decisions for education are made.